Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas

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A History from Within

Edited by
Ilan Pappé and Moshe Ma'oz

In loving memory of

Albert Hourani

A mentor, a colleague and above all a friend

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Introduction

In the introduction to his *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, the late Albert Hourani wrote that as an historian of the Middle East he had tried throughout his scholarly life to write the area's history 'from within':

> I began to concern myself more with that 'matter': with the nature and inner movements of the Near Eastern world on which Europe had tried to impose a new form.

Writing from 'within' meant for Hourani adopting a unique approach towards the concepts of 'modernization' and 'Westernization'. Most of Hourani's colleagues and scholarly peers in the West understood by these two concepts a process whereby, under the guidance and influence of the West, a local Middle Eastern society made the transition from the traditional to the modern age. For Hourani the two concepts described, first and foremost, an internal process, or rather two complimentary processes: the evolution and maturation of an Arab liberal thought on the one hand and a slow process of local social transformation which affected mainly the elites in the Arab provinces during the late Ottoman era on the other. While these processes were accelerated by the impact the West began exerting at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were not – as was commonly argued before Hourani made his scholarly contribution to the subject in the late 1960s – generated by it.

Hourani's approach was, and still is, severely criticized by many Western Orientalists who regard Middle Eastern history as no more than a political chapter in the relations between 'progressive' Western powers and 'semi-primitive' indigenous societies. This conventional approach proved particularly attractive to Jewish Israeli scholars whose

views on their Arab neighbours were very similar and who saw their state as a Western (i.e. 'progressive') island in a sea of Islam and 'tribalism'. However, Israeli scholars who with the years had become Albert Hourani's students, associates or academic friends were much influenced by his criticism of the conventional 'Orientalist' view. The essays in this volume present part of the impact Hourani's work has had on Israeli scholars who incorporated the 'internal approach' to the social and cultural history of the Middle East in their works and thus pay tribute to the way Hourani's invaluable scholarship has helped them to understand better the area they live in. He is greatly missed by each and everyone of us.

The essays broadly follow two of Hourani's main fields of interest – the local history of ideas in the modern era and the analysis of the 'politics of notables' in the Arab provinces during the Ottoman era. It is prefaced by a retrospective note kindly given to us by Roger Owen, in which he portrays the intricate and rich world of Albert Hourani the scholar, teacher and historian. Hourani the historian as well as the Orientalist stands out for the lucid and systematic nature of the contribution his works have made to the Middle Eastern and Islamic agenda.

In a way Hourani is made to belong here to the history of ideas of both the 'West' and 'East', two categories that in his case are blurred anyway as he formed part of both worlds and had his own as well. This fusion of ideas had been characteristic too of some of Hourani's heroes in history. This is certainly true of Muhammad Abduh but can also be said of Muhammad Husayn Haykal, whose place in the local history of ideas is the subject of the essay by Israel Gershoni which opens this collection. Gershoni follows Hourani in examining Haykal as a local scholar fascinated by European thought and yet as one who made his own original input on the subjects that were close to his heart. Haykal developed his thinking in relation to what he read in European and Islamic thought and in accordance with the social and political changes that were taking place around him. The attraction of positivism and the subsequent evolution of a more religion-oriented thought we find in Haykal are traced here as a chapter in the social history of ideas – a social history which, while it gives structural changes their due, refuses to diminish the role of ideas in moving the wheels of history.

In the second essay in this section, Gaby Piterberg looks at Hourani's approach to the scholarly debate that erupted upon the

publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. As Piterberg shows, one of the most important roles Albert Hourani saw for himself was that of cultural interpreter of the West to the East and vice versa, a role he hoped to fulfil by writing the history of the area. Accordingly, the article examines the issue of Orientalism in two ways. First, the author briefly sets out Hourani's views on the traditional scholarship of his field and his thoughts on the vehement criticism appearing in some of Edward Said's writings, primarily *Orientalism*, on that traditional scholarship. This is then juxtaposed with a look Hourani's own work through the prism of Said's *Orientalism*. For anyone who knew Hourani well enough it will come as is no surprise that even in the midst of this important debate he was seeking the middle ground, advocating a more measured approach through which Middle Eastern studies could be advanced. But for a while Hourani was also – and regrettably so in his own view – involved in the nitty-gritty of actual political life. His short but none the less stormy appearance on the political stage was as spokesperson for the Palestinian cause in the final years of the British Mandate in Palestine. It is therefore understandable why this period of his life should be of special fascination to Israeli scholars. His thoughts and reflections during an exercise in politics he would never repeat, reveal some of the ideas that would come to fruition later on in his works as a scholar. This part of our volume therefore concludes with Amikam Nachmani's article on Hourani's role in the inquiry of the Anglo–American Committee which was put together to consider the Palestine question in 1946 and 1947.

Nachmani follows the development of Hourani's early perceptions on Arab nationalism as found in the testimony he gave before the committee and in the articles he published while working in the Arab Office in London and compares them with his later works on the subject. The committee was headed by two judges and thus came to operate more or less like a court, reviewing the reality in Palestine in legal terms. Albert Hourani appeared as an unofficial witness in front of this 'tribunal' and his testimony may not have had much effect on the conclusion of the committee. He represented not only his own feelings but also the more general views of the Arabs of Palestine, in the midst of their struggle against Zionism. What for the contributors to this volume stands out particularly in Hourani's testimony is the measured voice of rationality that speaks here, something both parties to the conflict would throw to the wind a year and half later with the

outbreak of the war in May 1948.

The essays in the second part of the book have all been inspired in one way or another by Hourani's work on Arab–Ottoman society, which he viewed through the prism of what he coined the 'politics of notables'. This was a local *modus operandi* that enabled the elites of the Arab societies under Ottoman rule to mediate between the provinces and the centre and from which, at the same time, the notables themselves drew much benefit. A kind of an ethical code, it defined the moral behaviour of the elite and delineated the political arena; when it broke down, unrest and revolt followed.

This section opens with a methodological examination of the way Hourani conceptualized the Ottoman elites. With the general scheme for an elite analysis that he presented in the late 1960s, Hourani inspired a number of monographs on the subject. What has been missing, argues Ehud Toledano, is a wider focus on the relationship between the local Arab elites in the provinces and the Ottoman elite itself in the centre. He follows these relationships by attributing to them the double-edged process of inclusion and exclusion and thus gives us a new look at the Ottoman elites in general during the last two hundred years of the Empire.

Ilan Pappé has chosen to focus on one single family within the local Palestinian elite in the late Ottoman period, the House of the Husaynis. Pappé argues that, while Hourani assumed the 'politics of notables' to have become ineffectual and useless from the late nineteenth century onwards, it was still a most useful strategy for the Husaynis as late as the early 1920s. It was the experience gained in imperial and provincial politics that enabled the family to digest and absorb the catalytic economic, social and political developments taking place in Palestine during the late Ottoman period and the first years of the British Mandate; where it would prove no longer adequate was in the confrontation with Zionism.

The concluding article is by Moshe Ma'oz and follows the making of a political community in Syria from the Ottoman time and until independence. Here again it was the notables – of Damascus – who made such a development possible through exercising of the politics of notables. Ma'oz widens the scope and includes both a structural approach for examining the emergence of a political community in Syria, and a more individual one, when he attributes – as Hourani would – a major role not only to the notables of Damascus but also to the town's intellectuals in creating the new political community in

Syria. By doing so Ma'oz elegantly fuses the two fields of interest which have guided this book: society and culture.

Loyal to his approach of moderation in everything in life, Hourani searched, both as a historian and as an intellectual, for a bridge that could connect Europe and the Arab world. This book is a tribute to that search in many ways. It is further intended to show that for at least some Israelis, as for so many other Middle Eastern scholars, Hourani's has been the most appropriate and rewarding approach when it comes to dealing with the complex history of the modern Middle East, something he demonstrated again so brilliantly in his last and monumental book, *A History of the Arab Peoples*.

Ilan Pappé and Moshe Ma'oz, May 1997

1 ❁ Albert Hourani the Historian

Roger Owen

I am writing this within a few days of what would have been Albert Hourani's eightieth birthday. I am also reminded of how on 31 March 1975, exactly twenty years ago, I had the good fortune to spend part of his sixtieth birthday with him and Odile having lunch in the open balcony of a little cafe above the Barada river near the centre of Damascus. We had met, quite by accident, in the lobby of one of the new international hotels which were then springing up during Syria's first brief period of *infitah*. Albert had been invited to visit the country as an official guest of, I think, the Syrian Ministry of Culture. I remember that he seemed somewhat subdued, although whether because of his birthday or his return to a Syria which must have seemed almost unrecognizable to someone who came to know it well in the late 1930s and early 1940s, I could not tell.

The pull of memories like these still make it difficult to think objectively about Albert Hourani's life and work. Some things, of course, are clear: the enormous influence he exercised over generations of students, the establishment of the Middle East Centre at Oxford, the example he gave of how to live the scholarly life beyond politics and the desire for political influence. But his role as an historian is much more difficult to judge and what I offer here is no more than a first attempt to try to think through his work as a whole and to isolate significant turning points within it. I do this in the knowledge that, although the study of any great scholar's whole corpus of work is often useful, it must necessarily involve a process of lumping together different types of work written over a long period of time to produce something which, if we are not careful, could easily be taken for the 'essential' Hourani, an easy target for student essayists and a construct in which much of the sheer intellectual excitement, the enlivening

changes of vision and perspective, become flattened out to the point of caricature.

I will begin with a few words of what I think are necessary introduction before asking some more general questions about his progress from the writing of one type of history to another.

The first point to make is that Albert, like most historians of the modern Middle East, lived out his scholarly life in the light of considerable interrogation and publicity. Not only are we familiar with his books and articles, but there are also the two interviews he gave towards the end of his life as well as the two long reports which he wrote in the 1940s, one his official wartime investigation into the state of nationalist feeling among the young Arabs of the Fertile Crescent, the other the long exposition of the Palestinian case which he presented to the Anglo–American Committee of Inquiry in 1946.[1]

Beyond this there are the various reflections he offered on his own work to be found in these same interviews, in the introductions to his two collections of articles and in the numerous semi-autobiographical asides to be found scattered throughout his work, for example in the masterly and revealing obituary of the man who acted as one of his most important academic mentors, Sir Hamilton Gibb.[2] There is also one doctoral thesis for which he gave several long interviews and, undoubtedly, there will be many more.[3]

Among other things all this allows us access to the continuous process of self-interrogation in which Albert, with rare honesty, admitted to certain failings in his early work and to those areas where he believed he had outgrown some of his first intellectual positions. But we must also beware of the temptation to see him only as he saw himself. Such honesty has its own beguilements and may lead us to underrate some of his work simply because he no longer valued it himself.

Second, it is important to recognize the significance of some of the personal assets which he brought to his studies. Even though he sometimes appeared to regret it, his lack of training in the Orientalist tradition gave him a freedom to approach the Middle East without much of the heavy intellectual baggage which this usually entails. This gave him a space, which even the remarkable Hamilton Gibb lacked, to concentrate almost exclusively on the modern period, to 'cross boundaries between frontiers and disciplines' and so to be able to examine it in the light of some of the social science methodologies

which were beginning to be used in the 1950s and 1960s to structure the examination of non-European societies.[4] For much the same reason, Albert was freer than many Arabists to recognize the overarching importance of the Ottoman experience on the history of the Arab peoples and the way in which that history could only be written with respect to the materials just beginning to be examined in the Turkish archives. To this I would also add the enormous influence of his own Christian faith. As with Gibb, it was membership within a living religious tradition which saved him from the misperception that contemporary Islam had lost all of its formidable vitality and power to move.

Lastly, the accidents of his life brought Albert into contact not only with the Middle East itself as it underwent its painful transition from colonialism to early independence, but also a remarkable series of men who helped to plot this same path, beginning with Toynbee and Gibb and then extending to Geertz, Shils, Fallers and others whose work he got to know at the University of Chicago in the early 1960s. Just as important, he was quick to recognize the resources to be found inside Oxford itself, organizing a long series of discussions with sympathetic historians of Europe like Sir Richard Southern, the author of *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, as well as notable Orientalists like Richard Walzer and Samuel Stern. These served the important function of bridging the gap between the medievalists and the modernists, the Oriental Institute and the Middle East Centre. They also served to forward his own intellectual education, not to speak of my own and many of my newly appointed colleagues.

Let me now turn to the first phase of Albert's career as an historian which took place in and out of the Middle East during the ten turbulent years between 1937 and 1947. It was then, while teaching at the American University of Beirut, working as a researcher for the British Foreign Office and then acting as an aid to the Palestinian leadership in the final stages of their losing struggle for international support, that he came to meet many of the important political actors in the region as well to obtain an inside view of the behaviour of a whole variety of different parties, governments and political movements. It was this which led to the writing of his first two books, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (1946) and *Minorities in the Arab World* (1947). It was this too which eventually led him to abandon this type of politically-oriented contemporary history encouraged by

the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) and its presiding genius, Arnold Toynbee, under whose aegis he had conducted his Middle East research at the beginning of the Second World War.

Some of the reasons for this were revealed in two pieces of writing which were published in the Chatham House journal, *International Affairs*, in 1953. The first was a review of George Kirk's *The Middle East in the War 1939–1945*, a work which had been written under the general direction of Arnold Toynbee himself. The nub of Albert's criticism of the book is worth quoting in full:

> With many of Mr Kirk's judgements I agree; but they are so numerous and so strongly expressed as to bring questions into the mind of even the most sympathetic reader. Is it possible to write contemporary history *sub specie aeternitatis*? Will not the historian who tries to do so inevitably give to his own preconceptions and feelings the form of eternal truth? A foreigner reading this book might well be bewildered by the contrast between its studiously objective, detached and impersonal manner and the intensely subjective feelings and convictions it expresses. He might feel that the claim to pass judgement upon the actors in the historical drama was itself a product of the assumption, born of two centuries of power, that Britain was somehow outside history; and he would notice too that the author is more cautious about ascribing motives to the British government than to others, and that not a few of his judgements are relative; movements being seen not in themselves but in their relation with Great Britain.[5]

The thrust of this obvious act of *lèse-majesté* must have struck home because it elicited an immediate, if somewhat nervous, defence of contemporary history from none other than Arnold Toynbee himself.[6] But what is more to the point is the insight that this passage gives us into Albert's thinking at this time and his obvious need to come to terms with his own experiences as the adviser, first of a great imperial power (Great Britain), then of a weak colonized people (the Palestinians). This he did with purpose and unusual passion in a two-part article entitled, significantly, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East' published in *International Affairs* the same year. The opening paragraph sets the tone:

> There was a time, not so long ago, when British statesmen could look upon the Middle East and tell themselves that here at least was a region where Britain had built well: where old states saved from ruin

> and new ones brought to birth by British skill and devotion were moving gradually from tutelage to complete independence and where a harmony of interests, cemented by mutual sympathy and trust, formed a solid basis for lasting alliances. That dream has vanished and now we see things as they really are. The Middle East is in turmoil. Egypt is still not far from chaos; Arabs and Jews are still far from peace; it is doubtful if Arabia will not some day be drowned in the sea of oil on which it now floats happily, and whether even the solid virtues of the Turks are solid enough to bear the stresses of the modern world.[7]

And he goes on: 'So much is clear to everyone, and it is clear that in all the turmoil the first object of hatred is the Western world, and particularly Great Britain.' Why was this so? Albert's explanation is in two parts. The first is historical and involves highlighting the destructive powers of Westernization – e.g. on the level of doctrines and final convictions 'the West destroyed the old before it could be replaced by anything new' – and then the harmful impact of imperialism which, in one of his many memorable phrases, he described as 'self-confident force imposing itself upon resentful weakness'. The result was a loosening of links between government and governed, deepening tensions between the British and French and those they ruled and the growth of an opposition to colonial rule based on a conscious revival of a sense of solidarity, of danger and of the feeling of humiliation.

The second part of the explanation concerns the misunderstanding and misuse of their position by the British themselves. It was a fundamental weakness of her policy, he argued, that Britain 'never fully recognized the responsibility which her power and dominant influence imposed upon her.' She was not aware of the long-term effects of her policies. She moved between interference and non-interference. Above all she was guilty of a tendency to support both parties in a dispute until the moment of inescapable choice, and then to incline towards the stronger. This was 'fatal in an area where those disputes involved literally the life and death of communities.' It also encouraged violence because this was how the antagonists sought to obtain British support, thought they had it and then felt betrayed. Not surprisingly his prime example of the harmful effects of such policies was Palestine.[8]

There is a certain finality about this judgement, stemming so obviously from the pain of personal witness, which allows no further elaboration. And with only a few exceptions it marked the end of Albert's career as an adviser and commentator on contemporary events. We may suppose that this decision was probably supported by two other considerations. One was the sense that anyone engaged in this area must necessarily play the endless role of a Cassandra, constantly prophesying the worst. This is, of course, almost a *sine qua non* for gaining the attention of the governments you might wish to advise. But in Albert's case it was more obviously based on his own experience of the manner in which the post-1945 Middle Eastern political order had been born in such a way as to maximize its destructive possibilities at the expense of anything more positive. As the chapters of his last book, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (1991), dealing with the latter part of the twentieth century demonstrate by their wintry style, this was a view which later events seemed amply to confirm.

A second reason is provided by a comment he made about Hamilton Gibb's similar refusal to comment on contemporary Middle Eastern events after about 1951. In Albert's own explanation this was 'partly, perhaps, because of Gibb's feeling that there was little a scholar could do to solve problems or to bring pressure to bear on those concerned with them, partly because of a certain lack of ease in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East as the decades pass' and as 'changes in feeling and habit' become linked with changes in 'intellectual concern and conviction'. By the 1950s British and French power was receding and the Muslim peoples were becoming responsible for their own political destiny. In these new circumstances, 'a European scholar could not take an effective part in their political processes, but he might help them by setting those processes in a longer perspective of historical development.'[9]

This was indeed Albert's own programme as carried out in his teaching and writing from then on. Just how quick he was to put it into effect can be seen from his last piece of contemporary history, his reflections on the Suez Crisis of 1956, published in 1958.[10] Gone is the passion which seems to ignite the pages of 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East' to be replaced by a series of magisterial comments on the role of great powers in history – e.g., great powers cannot afford to look too far into the future, any action they take is bound to be a compromise, etc. – and some extraordinarily prescient

comments on future developments – for example, 1948 brought not one but two nations into existence in Palestine, the desire for Arab unity was also a cause of disunity, etc. For the rest, in the course of many sensitive comments on some of the general themes which were to interest him to the end of his life – e.g., the exercise of political power, the uneven relations between weak and strong states, the need for nationalist ideologies to be supplemented by something extra like an appeal for equity and social justice, and so on – one can also sense a palpable sigh of relief as Britain's failure at Suez began to reveal the larger truth that her years of hegemony were finally coming to an end, making it possible at last to conceive of a new and happier relationship between her and the peoples of the Middle East.

As for the development of his own approach to the history of the Middle East, Albert's own comments provide a useful guide. He notes the continuing influence of Toynbee's and Gibb's notion that the modern period was to be studied in terms of the impact of one civilization (or, in Gibb's revised formula, one 'society') upon another. This was something that he was to criticize quite strongly in his later life, with good reason. But I myself believe that this caused him to express too harsh a view of his own *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (1961) which, in my own opinion, does greater justice to the indigenous roots of what was clearly a Middle Eastern response to the growing danger posed by the expansion of European power than he himself allowed.[11] And if he sticks rather too closely to the conventional 'reformist' chain of influence from Afghani to Abduh to Rashid Rida and so on without making much effort to show the impact of their ideas on a wider audience, he is surely right to see secular Arab nationalism as passing through various stages as it progressed from being a largely cultural to a much more political movement with significant inputs from a variety of different sites including Beirut, Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo as well as a widely shared response to the events in Palestine.

Later, as he describes it, he passed through a period of great uncertainty concerning his attempts to write one of the successor volumes to Gibb and Bowen's *Islamic Society and the West* on the Syrian provinces 1800–60. As happens to many historians, the original scheme soon began to seem hopelessly inadequate and was progressively replaced by other newer ones based on trends and methods of analysis to be found in the contemporary social science.

Hence, as we know, Albert began to move away from a concern with the central importance of Western political and intellectual influence to an agenda based on the need to finds ways of doing justice to both Ottoman and socioeconomic perspectives as well. Though never completed as far as the Syrian provinces were concerned, we can chart the various stages of his changing approach from the early, 'The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the 18th Century' (1957), still written very much under the influence of Gibb and Bowen as well as of ideas about proto-Arab nationalist movements to be found in George Antonius's *Arab Awakening*, through 'The Politics of Notables' (1965) written directly after his 'Chicago' phase, to what I think was his most comprehensive attempt to set out his new model for structuring a 'total' history of the Middle East expressed in the guise of a very personal research agenda which he put forward to a sub-committee of the Middle East Studies Association, and which was published in 1976.[12]

As he describes it this last agenda contains four themes. The first is the type of urban history which focuses on the city as a social organism:

> [on] the way the different parts interact so as to maintain a certain equilibrium, the lines along which their strength is mobilized, the bargains they can strike with government, and the relations of economic change and political dependence between the constituent groups – *ulama*, merchants and skilled artisans; Christians and Jews; proletarians and temporary dwellers in the towns.

Second, and as he notes, closely connected with the first 'but extending far beyond the city', there is:

> ... the study of the systems of patronage around which society was organized for political purposes: those pyramids of relations of protection and dependence which ran all through society, linking the most remote and 'closed' communities with a broader society and ultimately with the great cities and their governments, providing a certain protection for the powerless and a machinery for political mobilization for the 'notables' at the top, and a means of 'manipulation' for governments to extend their influence even beyond the range of bureaucratic control.

The third theme was the study of what he called those 'recurrent' tribal or nomadic movements in Islamic history and the fourth the importance of small-scale studies of limited regions and communities.[13]

I should say at once that I regard this schema as a great advance on the much simpler version originally suggested by Max Weber. For one thing, it relies very largely on categories like *a'yan* which are not imposed from outside but which would certainly have made sense to urban dwellers in, say, nineteenth-century Damascus.[14] It also has the great merit of seeing pre-modern government as an endless process of negotiation within general limits set by the power and legitimacy of the governors and the ability to resist of the governed. But, as some of those who attempted to employ parts of this schema in their own research were soon to find, the categories themselves were difficult to pin down and, very often, proved incapable of capturing some of the sheer variety of the historical reality. To take just one example, the 'notables' in Albert's original concept were defined essentially in terms of a role – intermediation – and not in terms of any particular criteria of wealth or status. Hence they do not constitute anything so hard and fast as a social class or even a group with common interests. And, as a result, their presence can only be discovered when they are 'caught in the act', as it were, that is when their activities as mediators between government and people makes it into the historical record, usually during some time of urban crisis. As it turned out, such fleeting testimony to power and possible cohesion is too rare and too elusive to provide much of a scaffold for a satisfactory urban history.

We can also judge this same schema as it was employed by Albert himself to organize important parts of his *History of the Arab Peoples*. The results, for me at least, are a little disappointing. As Shaul Bakhash has suggested in a perceptive review, this particular concentration on urban politics and its influence on a larger regional hinterland seems to lock the historian into the examination of a particular model over centuries of Middle Eastern historical time, with the same actors repeating the same role in the same political and social space over and over again.[15] It also poses the inevitable question of how far a schema developed in the context of the urban life of the great Syrian cities can be extended to encompass the different patterns of political and socioeconomic life to be found elsewhere in the Arab world, say in Egypt or Arabia.[16]

It is for reasons of this kind that I conclude that we will not see anything like the emergence of a distinctively Houranian school of history, at least if this is defined as the systematic deployment – and then further elaboration – of the concepts outlined above. What we do have, however, is a situation in which many of his colleagues and students are left with the feeling that they had participated in the development of his system of ideas and, by extension, of an important attempt to find ways of integrating the various strands of Middle Eastern political, socioeconomic and ideological history into a cohesive whole. Almost certainly they will find this has enriched their own work at the same time.

For the rest, and for the future generations of scholars who will know him only from his written work, his legacy is more difficult to comprehend. But I would hazard a guess that, however it comes to be seen in its entirety, it will contain at least two vital ingredients. One is the overall consistency of tone: wise, questioning, patient, ever curious, seeing all, taking nothing for granted. The second is the sheer variety of the ways in which he approached the study of the Middle East, from inside and from outside, from high to low, from ideas to material reality. Fortunately for us he never entirely abandoned the type of intellectual history which seeks to evaluate the impact of ideas and stereotypes on the mutual perceptions, and misperceptions, of East and West.[17] To this should be added his perceptive essays on the life and works of such influential persons as Antonius, Gibb, Massignon, Volney and, of course, the ever fascinating T. E. Lawrence whose little study stood just over the wall from Albert's Oxford garden. To read any, or all of this work is to become involved in a process of mental limbering up, a freeing of the mind from old prejudices, glimpsing exciting new perspectives for future exploration.

Before concluding I will raise just one final question, largely because it still remains a puzzle for me. This is the extent to which Albert saw some pattern or purpose to the history of the peoples which he was writing. For him, I believe, such a question was unavoidable. It was part and parcel of some of the types of European history which he found so congenial. Equally important, it was a quest for just such a pattern which occupied those general historians of the Middle East or Islam – notably Hamilton Gibb, Marshall Hodgson, Louis Massignon, Jacques Berque, and Ira Lapidus – whose work fascinated him the most. Nevertheless, there were other pulls as well. He was as

aware as anyone of the dangers of what the British historian, Herbert Butterfield, was to call the 'Whig view of history', of writing history as teleology, of constructing a narrative to demonstrate the unfolding of some great purpose. Even more important, he was extraordinarily careful about coming to premature judgement. Once he had called British policy to early account in his article 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East', his preferred method, perfectly demonstrated in his Antonius lecture, '*The Arab Awakening* forty years on', was to criticize some earlier judgement by placing the question at issue in some larger or more persuasive context.[18] He desired to be fair. He wished to give historical actors the benefit of the doubt in much the same way that Toynbee had asserted in his previously cited reply to Albert's critical review.[19] Last, but by no means least, he realized how personal judgement strongly expressed could divide colleague from colleague, teacher from student, particularly in that dangerous minefield of Middle Eastern studies.

And yet, when we are faced with the bleak tone of the post-1967 section of his *History of the Arab Peoples*, with its final chapter entitled 'A Disturbance of Spirits' and where the only note of optimism is given to Sayyid Qutb with his prediction of the end of Western world leadership, it is difficult not to imagine him sharing the view which he had earlier attributed to Hamilton Gibb that 'modern [Middle Eastern] governments and élites were acting in ignorance or rejection of their own traditions of social life and morality and that their failures sprang from this'.[20]

I will leave it there.

Notes

I would like to thank Shaul Bakhash, Philip Khoury, Roy Mottahedeh and Mary Wilson for their helpful comments and suggestions.

1. For a complete bibliography of Albert Hourani's published works through to 1983 see: Mary C. Wilson, 'Bibliography of Published Works by A. H. Hourani', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 16 (1984), pp. 553–63. For his subsequent works, see Mary C. Wilson, 'A Bibliography of Albert Hourani's Published Works' in John Spagnolo (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani* (Reading, 1992), pp. 287–306. Another bibliography appears in Abdulaziz A. al-Sudairi, 'The Making of Modern Arab Societies: An Intellectual Biography of Albert Hourani', PhD dissertation preseted to The

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, 1993, pp. 207–21. The interviews appear in Nancy A. Gallagher, *Approaches to the History of the Middle East* (Reading, 1994) and Thomas Naff, *Paths to the Middle East: Ten Scholars Look Back* (Albany, 1993). A copy of Albert's wartime report, 'Great Britain and Arab Nationalism' (1943) can be found in PRO FO 141/1206.

2. 'H. A. R. Gibb: The Vocation of an Orientalist', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 58 (1972). Reprinted in Albert Hourani, *Europe and the Middle East* (London and Basingstoke, 1980), pp. 104–34.

3. al-Sudairi, 'The Making of Modern Arab Societies: An Intellectual Biography of Albert Hourani'.

4. 'H. A. R. Gibb: The Vocation of an Orientalist', p. 111.

5. *International Affairs* 24/2 (April 1953), p. 205. Kirk's fussy system of transliterating Arab proper names also incurred Albert Hourani's criticism, a point he sought to underline by signing the review 'Albirt l-Hawrani'.

6. Arnold Toynbee, 'The Writing of Contemporary History for Chatham House', *International Affairs* 29/2 (April 1953), pp. 137–40.

7. Albert Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East', – *International Affairs* 29/1 (January 1953), p. 22.

8. Ibid., pp. 22–3, 26–7, 30–1, 33–4.

9. 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – II', *International Affairs* 29/2 (April 1953), pp. 157–8.

10. 'H. A. R. Gibb: The Vocation of an Orientalist', pp. 115–16.

11. See Albert Hourani's comments on *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* in his preface to the new paperback edition (London, etc., 1970), p. viii.

12. See Wilson, 'Bibliography of Published Works by A. H. Hourani' for details of first publication. 'The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the Eighteenth Century' was reprinted with revisions in *A Vision of History* (Beirut, 1961), 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of the Notables' was reprinted in *The Emergence of the Middle East* (London and Basingstoke, 1981), pp. 36–66, and 'The Present State of Islamic and Middle Eastern Historiography' was reprinted in *Europe and the Middle East*, pp. 161–96.

13. 'The Present State of Islamic and Middle Eastern Historiography', pp. 187–90.

14. There is an obvious contrast between Albert Hourani's method of trying to generate categories of analysis from inside and his remark about Gibb going through European books on religion, philosophy and psychology 'in search of categories in terms of which he could explain Islam'. 'H. A. R. Gibb: The Vocation of an Orientalist', p. 121.

15. Shaul Bakhash, 'In Search of the Arab Soul', *The New York Review of Books* (26 September 1991).

16. See for example: al-Sudairi, 'The Making of Modern Arab Societies: An Intellectual Biography of Albert Hourani', pp. 200–2.

17. Most of Albert's later writings on the subject are collected in his *Europe and the Middle East*. See also its Introduction, pp. xi–xiii.

18. Published in *The Emergence of the Middle East*, pp. 193–215.
19. Toynbee, 'The Writing of Contemporary History for Chatham House', pp. 138–9.
20. *History of the Arab Peoples*, ch. 26 and pp. 445–6; 'H. A. R. Gibb: The Vocation of an Orientalist', p. 115.

2 ❁ The Return of the East: Muhammad Husayn Haykal's Recantation of Positivism

Israel Gershoni

> Somewhere in our writing of history we need to show historical processes as reflected in the minds of individuals who are able to articulate them and, in so doing, to change their nature. There is, of course, a danger in this, that of saying or implying that great individual thinkers are the motive force of historical change ... Even if they do not themselves create the changes, however, they can give them a meaning, and to decipher this meaning is an essential part of our work as historians. If the ideas of Power and Wealth can be organizing principles of historical thought, so too can Truth. [Albert Hourani, 'How Should We Write the History of the Middle East?']

Introduction

Muhammad Husayn Haykal (1888–1956) was among the most prominent intellectuals in Egypt and in the Arab world in the period between the world wars. He began his career as a fiction writer and gifted literary critic before the First World War.[1] However, it was the post-war era and the aftermath of the national revolution of 1919 that opened new horizons for his intellectual activity and expression. As editor of a new political newspaper, *al-Siyasa* (1922-), as founder and editor of a literary-intellectual avant-garde weekly, *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya* (1926–), as a prolific writer (of short stories in particular), and as a historian, biographer, social thinker, and young ideologue of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party, Haykal quickly became one of the most active and influential intellectuals of the decade.[2] Through the prism of his somewhat naive and idealistic self-perception, he viewed himself above all as a critical journalist:

> The observer who always stands outside the arena of events does not become entangled in its raging turmoil. Even when he becomes very close to the responsible [i.e., the politicians] and supports them in matters about the rightness of which he is convinced ... this proximity never involves a sharing of the burden of responsibility. For the journalist, as long as he deserves the title of an objective and fair journalist, is called upon to support only what he believes to be true.[3]

Indeed, Haykal in these years associated himself with those 'committed journalists' who fight to uncover the complete truth and act as the watchdogs of the political regime. Their mission, then, is to serve faithfully 'the whole people in its claim for the liberation and independence of the homeland.'[4]

Beyond this, Haykal considered himself a modernist intellectual whose task was to introduce the finest products of European (particularly French) culture, literature, and philosophy to Egyptian society. He regarded the European model of progress and modernity as an ideal which his society should strive to emulate by taking rapid strides towards Westernization and secularization.[5] That strategy was reflected clearly in his writings from the 1920s. At the beginning of the decade he published a two-volume work on the life and thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1921 and 1923).[6] The book was dedicated 'to free Egypt, to the hearts beating with the values of liberty, justice, and fraternity, to the souls that scorn injustice, to the intellects that reject any shackles on thought.'[7] In the introduction Haykal explains his reasons for writing the book. At bottom was his desire to present to his readers, and especially his young readers, the life and writings of Rousseau 'as a supreme model of intellectual greatness'.[8] He added that 'as an Egyptian first and as an Easterner second, [I] want to acquaint Egyptians and Easterners with the potent vitality which has emerged in the West. Through such a presentation it may be possible to base relations between East and West on a foundation of liberal and sincere mutual understanding.'[9]

In a collection of articles and essays (among them several which the young Haykal had written for *al-Jarida*) published in mid-decade, *Fi awqat al-faragh* (1925), and which, characteristically, was dedicated to his spiritual mentor, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, we find essays on Anatole France, Pierre Loti, US President Woodrow Wilson, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and on Egyptian modernist thinkers whom Haykal admired, such as Qasim Amin and Taha Husayn.[10] Later as well, in a

volume of biographical sketches (1929), Haykal skilfully portrayed Beethoven, Shakespeare, Shelley, and Hippolyte Taine, along with figures from the Egyptian repertoire: Cleopatra, the Khedives, Isma'il and Tawfiq, Butrus Ghali, Mustafa Kamil, Qasim Amin, the poet Isma'il Sabri, and Abd al-Khaliq Tharawat.[11]

The infusion of European culture into Egyptian culture was supposed to entail the rediscovery and reconstruction of the territorial cultural image of the Land of the Nile. Haykal devoted much of his intellectual energy in this period to reviving the ancient pharaonic heritage and the memory of its cultural and material splendour. His working assumption was that pharaonic civilization should serve as a prime source for establishing Egypt's modern communal identity. Western-oriented progress would be generated together with the rehabilitation of the pharaonic past because it alone contained those 'Western' cultural assets which ancient Egypt had bequeathed to the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, on which modern Europe was founded. It was, therefore, the recovery of Egypt's 'pharaonic essence' which held out the promise of progress and modernity.[12]

In the more literary sphere, Haykal conceived the idea of 'Egyptian National Literature' (*al-adab al-qawmi al-misri*). He espoused the cultivation of a distinctively Egyptian literature (fiction, poetry, drama, fine arts, sculpture, painting, and music) of which the materials and themes would derive exclusively from the landscapes of the Land of the Nile, from the intimate and eternal dialogue between the Egyptian and his homeland, and from the primeval reservoir of pharaonic symbols and images. At the same time he endeavoured to release Egyptian literature from traditional Arab–Islamic conventions, genres, and themes. Around *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya* Haykal cultivated an avant-garde school of young writers and artists who, in theory and in practice, shaped a large repertoire of 'national literature'.[13]

Haykal derived his theoretical basis for the idea of a 'national literature', and for his more general conception of territorial Egyptian nationalism, from Hippolyte Taine. In the early 1920s, Taine's mechanistic environmental determinism (which Haykal had adopted before 1918) became a central conceptual framework through which Haykal sought to shape a new image of his country as a national community which drew its cultural distinctiveness from its natural environment and from the organic continuity of its primordial history, dating from the pharaonic 'golden age'.[14]

At a deeper level, the paradigm that guided Haykal in this era was the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte. Haykal absorbed the principles of positivism from Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid and the *al-Jarida* circle, and later during his lengthy stay in France (1909–12). He accommodated the Comtian philosophy to his own distinctive style in 1916–17.[15] In the first half of the 1920s it became the organizing principle through which he examined and planned the transformation he believed was essential for his society, and for articulating his vision of Egypt's acceptance among the world's enlightened nations. Like other intellectuals of his generation, Haykal believed that Egypt's development proceeded according to the Comtian positivist law of universal historic evolution. In the modern age (and more immediately after 1919), Egypt was inevitably and inexorably advancing from the traditional Islamic–Ottoman stage to the positivist, progressive modernist stage based on secular scientific culture, on freedom and democracy, and on the spirit of absolute, rational freedom of inquiry. In this era, religion in general, and Islam in particular would no longer have a role to play in the ordering of the society, the political regime, cultural institutions, or the collective identity.[16]

The first cracks in Haykal's positivist paradigm appeared towards the end of the 1920s. He began to lose his confidence in science and scientific progress. The more he became involved in his country's public life and grasped its complexity, its inherent inner conflicts, and the irrational forces it generated, and the stronger became the antipositivist intellectual moods emanating from Europe, the more Haykal was inclined to notice limitations and flaws in positivist philosophy. Casting about for alternative options and directions, he found, first in Eastern civilization and its intrinsic spiritualism, and afterwards in Islamic history and the Islamic–Arab cultural heritage, new frameworks through which he could continue to cultivate his modernist message and transmit it to his society.[17]

Scholarly research on Haykal has frequently addressed the genesis of this intellectual reorientation. Various studies have correctly located it in the second half of the 1920s. Nevertheless, interpretations, readings, and periodizations have differed. Thus, for example, Baber Johansen finds the turning point in the years 1928–33, with the waning of Haykal's confidence in reason and science as the exclusive constituents of the new order of the modern world and human self fulfilment as part of that order. Haykal's expectation that scientific

progress would inevitably prevail in accordance with the positivist model was challenged, and finally dashed, by what he perceived as the 'European crisis' of rationalism and scientism. Haykal found this new scepticism strongly reflected in European intellectual discourse.[18] 'Disappointing Europe' (Johansen's chapter title) could no longer be for Haykal a source of human progress and happiness in the modern era. Hence his turn to the East in the hope of finding a new spiritualism to extricate mankind from the crisis of rationalism and materialism.[19] David Semah characteristically calls this 'period of transition' a 'retreat from positivism' and locates it from 1929 to 1932. In his view, however, Haykal's 'decline of enthusiasm for science' was only a secondary motive in a more central process: his shift of interest from pharaonism and territorial-centred Egyptianism to Islam and Arab culture, and from a Western to an Eastern Islamic orientation.[20]

Charles Smith, in his important and authoritative biography of Haykal, examines the shift in a chapter titled 'The Road to Islam', which covers the years from 1924 to 1933.[21] Through a textual analysis of Haykal's messages within the changing sociopolitical context in which they were produced, Smith uncovers, in this transition period, a series of dilemmas and preliminary responses by Haykal which only in the 1930s would attain intellectual maturity. Smith argues that Haykal's liberation from his early dogmatic positivism and his increasing doubts as to the ability of science to fulfil humanity's needs do not justify the conclusion that they 'indicat[ed] Haykal's loss of hope in the promise of Western culture, reason, and science'. Haykal did not reject science per se, 'but science as perfection, able to achieve total knowledge of the universe and happiness for all, including the masses.'[22] In this way, according to Smith, Haykal adapted himself to the developments that were taking place in the European intellectual discourse itself during this period. In the final analysis, this was a tactical shift. It was engendered by mounting, but seemingly passing, social and political pressures and the intellectual's need to develop a new, more popular, forum of discourse ('to look to the East for spiritual guidance') with broad publics in the society[23] without losing his autonomy as an intellectual who continued to maintain a Westernist secular discourse with the elite.[24]

In a sense, Smith's illuminating treatment tends to read the earlier stage, the 1920s, in the terms of the later stage, the 1930s, when Haykal's 'shift to Islam' occurred. Smith himself admits that 'until

the early 1930s, Haykal did not refer specifically to Islam as being the basis of faith for Egypt'.[25] As a result, Smith's attempt to interpret all the years preceding 1933 as 'the road to Islam' misses the distinctive characteristics of the transition period itself. Thus, for example – as we shall try to show – Haykal's transition to Easternism and his adoption of Eastern spiritualism was far more substantial than Smith suggests.

One central problem which all these interpretations share is that they do not distinguish clearly between three (or perhaps four) separate ideational processes which characterized Haykal's intellectual evolution from 1926 to 1933. This differentiation is justified, indeed essential, for three reasons. First, it emerges from a close reading of dozens of texts (books, articles, essays, and reviews) written by Haykal in this period and from the manner in which he himself consciously steered the process of intellectual change. Second, it enables a more systematic and critical scrutiny of the various stages in the transition process. And third, it allows for a more accurate periodization of the processes.

The first, and earliest, process involved the breakdown of Haykal's dogmatic and naive faith in positivism and his turn to Eastern civilization in a quest for spiritual sources, while drawing intellectual inspiration from Henri Bergson. We shall argue that this process began in 1927 and reached maturity by the end of the decade, in 1930. The second process consisted of Haykal's endeavour to develop for his society and for Eastern societies in general a new strategy for fomenting modernization which would limit and restrain Westernization processes and deliberately accentuate an Eastern identity and culture. Haykal's conclusion was that the assimilative and dependent European model of social progress was no longer appropriate, and that the modernist intellectual must shape a new and more independently authentic model permitting a distinctively Eastern road to modernity. This process occurred from 1928 to 1933.[26] In the third process Haykal jettisoned the heroic and admiring image of the West in favour of a pessimistic but 'realistic' image of the West as an 'imperialistic civilization'. No longer did he regard the encounter between East and West as a voluntary and fruitful inter-cultural exchange based on mutuality, understanding and cooperation. It was now seen as a forced encounter between a conquering, exploiting civilization (the West) and a colonized, exploited civilization (the East). This stage of the process took place from 1929 to 1933.[27] The fourth process occurred

somewhat later and was more halting and equivocal. This was the transition from the concept of pharaonism as the exclusive cultural foundation for the Egyptian national identity to an attempt to open the communal identity to extraterritorial Islamic and Arab cultural elements which, once merged, would become legitimate underpinnings of Egypt's identity. Harbingers of the process could be discerned by the late 1920s and early 1930s, though it became more visible from 1933 to 1935.[28]

It is true that all these processes would, ultimately, pave the way for Haykal's shift to Islamic subjects from 1932 to 1934, when he first published his biography of the Prophet as a series of articles in *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya* (and in book form, *Hayat Muhammad*, in early 1935).[29] However, for Haykal – as for the 'external' intellectual historian – these were more than merely instrumental transition processes. They cannot be interpreted only as a kind of discursive womb in which the turn to Islam took shape. Rather, they should also be treated as autonomous and immanent. They constitute elements of a distinctive intellectual discourse which is represented by a rich textual corpus possessing specific qualities and produced within a particular historical context. As such, they merit a study in their own right.

This essay takes as its subject the first process in Haykal's recantation of the positivist paradigm. As noted, this process occurred at a very early stage and reached comparative maturity already in the late 1920s. As will be seen immediately, the analysis being proposed here is deeply indebted to the narratives of Johansen, Semah, and above all, Smith. Nevertheless, it also takes issue with several of their assumptions and interpretations, and on occasion attempts to revise them. With this in mind, the article begins by describing the evolution of Haykal's intellectual transformation through a systematic chronological analysis of relevant key texts. Subsequently, an explanation is offered of why the shift occurred and of Haykal's motivation for fomenting it.

The Intellectual Transformation: Evolution and Principal Stages

Until 1926–27 Haykal's faith in positivism remained unshaken. Comtian positivism in its extreme mechanistic interpretation was the exclusive conceptual framework for explaining human history and the process through which Egyptian society would progress to modernity. Haykal's articles and reviews in this period reaffirmed his

confidence in the positivist paradigm. In an extensive three-part essay published in the summer of 1926 – in indirect defence of Taha Husayn's *Fi al-shi'r al-jahili* (1926) – titled 'The Men of Religion and the Men of Science' (clearly alluding, respectively, to Egypt's religious establishment and to intellectuals such as Taha Husayn, Ali Abd al-Raziq, and himself), he asserted that 'between science and religion there is not and there cannot be any conflict or rivalry'.[30] Each occupied 'a distinctive domain which is not the domain of the other'.[31] They were concerned with two different spheres of man's and society's interests; therefore any seeming conflict between them could have no genuine grounds.

At the same time, Haykal discerned a 'rivalry between men of religion and men of science', caused by a 'struggle for power and over the political order'.[32] In a clear allusion to the contemporary Egyptian '*ulama*', he attacked the official religious authority as a reactionary, outmoded system which should be abolished. Drawing on Comte's scheme of the stages of historical development, Haykal argued that the stage of scientific positivism demanded the elimination of the clergy's political power and intellectual influence. Indeed, the scientific stage having been attained, the clerics themselves sensed the dilution of both their religious authority and political strength. Hence their desperate battle against the 'men of science', the intellectuals. Yet in this fight for survival they were driven not by a moral impulse, but by a desire to hold onto the state's material resources and positions – privileges they no longer merited. Haykal was convinced that such manipulations doomed the 'men of religion',[33] since they challenged 'God's laws of nature'.

Islam, he argued, was no different from other religions: 'Islam's attitude towards science is identical to that of all the other faiths'.[34] Historically, Islam was even more stringent than other creeds in regulating social relations and personal beliefs. In the modern era, Islam itself provided legitimation for abolishing the reactionary religious establishment and wresting authority from its official upholders, the *ulama* . Under Islam, scientific and intellectual endeavours were permissible only if they did not assail belief in God or in the pillars of the faith. Haykal's conclusion was that official Islam must follow the modern European model and restrict itself solely to matters of faith and spirit. All other branches of human experience – society, politics, culture – were subject to free scientific inquiry and

analysis, grounded in reason and a secular approach.[35]

A year later Haykal reaffirmed that his faith in positivism remained unwavering. He did so by publishing, in *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya*, a translation of the entire introduction of Levy-Bruhl, the eminent French scholar from the Sorbonne, to his book, *La philosophie d'Auguste Comte*.[36] Haykal prefaced his translation, which appeared in two parts, with learned remarks on the incomparable contribution of Comte's philosophy to modern thought. Positivist philosophy, Haykal declared, 'which originates with the great philosopher Auguste Comte, has had a profound impact on human thought in recent generations. Hence, philosophers from different nations are engaged in its study'.[37] Haykal reaffirmed his adherence to the positivist creed in other articles and texts during these years. Positivism, he continued to believe, offered an exclusive framework of explanation for human evolution and bore special relevance for Egypt's Islamic society.[38]

Yet in that summer of 1927, incipient signs of the impending transformation were already apparent. Although stressing his unflagging optimism in mankind's inevitable and irreversible advance on the road of progress according to the evolutionary scheme delineated in positivist philosophy, Haykal was for the first time struck by a feeling of pessimism and uncertainty. He attributed this gloomy mood to the traumatic shock suffered by humanity in the First World War and to the lingering 'global moral crisis' in its aftermath.[39] More specifically, as he wrote in a characteristic article titled 'Towards a New Life: Knowledge Is the Basis of Faith in the Future', Haykal considered the political and economic upheavals that the war had unleashed in Europe, Africa and Asia, particularly the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the global gains of Communism, as the 'source of the present world anxiety [*qalaq*]'.[40] A salient indicator of this 'general anxiety' was the erosion of self-confidence in Europe itself: 'If before the war one saw the European nations taking pride in the fact that they had discovered the way to the truth through science, nowadays one can sense the imminent collapse of many of the principles in which they believed, together with a desire on their part to seek in the spiritual past of the East [*fi madi al-Sharq al-ruhi*] a road to a [new] belief, on the supposition that this will lead to happiness.'[41] In Haykal's view, European moods and the infatuation with Eastern spirituality was clear evidence of two processes: first, the decline of the global hegemony previously enjoyed by European

civilization and a growing awareness by Europeans of cultural parity with the cultures of Asia and Africa. And second, 'the demise of the belief in science.'[42] These phenomena, Haykal thought, reflected 'a thirst of the [European] mind for new morals and ideals, different from those they had believed in until now'.[43] In other words, Haykal perceived these developments as initial harbingers of an intellectual and ethical transformation then underway in Europe.

At this early juncture, Haykal still addressed the 'manifestations of disorientation afflicting the world' through the use of the old positivist methods. His solution for overcoming the shocks and dislocations afflicting human society was to cling even more steadfastly to reason, science, and scientific knowledge, and to articulate a more effective strategy for disseminating and inculcating that knowledge among broad sectors of society. Now more attuned to the sentiments and experiences of the popular strata (he emphasized primarily two categories, 'the young' and 'the masses'), Haykal was convinced that the solution to pervasive human misery, and to the development of Egypt in particular, lay 'in stripping away the mask of delusions from the eyes of the masses [*uyun al-jamahir*] and exposing them fully to all the influences and achievements of science'.[44] No sphere of life should remain 'closed to children during their studies, or to the multitudes [*al-sawad*] in the course of their lives.'[45] Each individual must be given the opportunity to learn everything of which he is capable 'through the mode of pure science'.[46] With such scientific knowledge at his command, he could 'work out for himself, his beliefs, his habits and his moral system.'[47] The solution, then, was for the enlightened elite, which knew the secret of reason and science, to educate and enlighten the masses, to inculcate in them scientific methods and rational modes of thought – the 'high' scientific culture – thus 'elevating' them to a higher level of enlightened modern life.[48] Haykal urged the 'common people' not to regress, not to sanctify outmoded beliefs and habits, and not to cling to reactionary dogmas. 'Scientific knowledge is the foundation for the faith of the future.'[49] Its wide promotion, transmission, and reception held out the promise for mankind's well-being, progress, and happiness, and for Egypt's advance as part of mankind.[50]

By early 1928, the embryonic shift in Haykal's thought had taken on more substance. In two articles he published in February of that year, the first in *al-Hilal*, titled 'The New Light – When Will it

Dawn?',[51] and the second in *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya*, titled 'The East in the Era of its Revival,'[52] Haykal developed more extensively and more cogently the themes he had adduced hesitantly and amorphously half a year earlier. The need for Western civilization, and with it all of humanity, 'to return to the spiritual East', he now believed, was no ephemeral phenomenon, but ingrained and long-lasting. Its source should be traced to the acute moral crisis that struck post-First World War Europe and Europe's need to overcome the crisis by finding spiritual solace in the East.

As he developed the new theme of a 'sick humanity' in need of healing through the spiritual values of the East, Haykal drew inspiration from what he saw as a shifting European intellectualism. Here he found legitimation for the change he was fomenting in his own attitude.[53] It is important to realize that only a short time earlier, Haykal had posited as the foundation of the 'new revival in the East' the 'struggle [*al-jihad*] for freedom of thought [*huriyyat al-fikr*]'. As he saw it, the supreme goal of building an enlightened, modern civilization in the East lay in liberating human intelligence from the shackles of tradition and religious dogma and in the relentless battle of the 'enlightened intellectuals' [*al-mustanirin*] for the absolute victory of reason and freedom against 'reaction and reactionaries', 'ignorance', 'impotence', and 'hypocrisy'. Haykal had thus found direct inspiration in European positivism, in his confidence in progress, science, and freedom of thought which would put an end to religious dogma and its carriers, the *'ulama'*.[54]

Now, however, he redefined the 'revival of the East' in terms of its ability to provide a 'new light' and a 'new spiritual source' for the declining West and for crisis-ridden humanity.[55] Increasingly, he identified with those European thinkers and publicists who, in the face of the crisis in Europe, were also calling for a 'return to the East'. In measured but unfaltering steps, he embarked on the road of a systematic effort to create a new representation for the East which underlined its distinctive individual qualities. To this end, Haykal also adopted elements and themes of the Easternist discourse which was evolving in Egyptian intellectual circles of the time.[56]

'Today's world,' Haykal's first article began, 'is pervaded by a sense of psychological anxiety [*qalaq nafsani*] whose source lies in the need for an assurance of security based on a bond [*sila*] between man and the universe – a bond through which mankind will achieve true

serenity.'[57] The philosophical certainty, psychological security, unshakable social and cultural foundation, optimism, and confidence in the future which the West's scientific-materialistic civilization had given its peoples and promised to all mankind had been vitiated and eroded. This was most strikingly illustrated by 'the appeal of a group of Western thinkers and scientists to the East, to its beliefs, its philosophy, in the hope that in it they might discover the bond [*sila*] they sought ... a simple faith in which the world in its present stage can find serenity and a spiritual haven ...'[58]

Haykal did not elaborate on the 'group of Western thinkers' whose position would henceforth become an important source of legitimation for his intellectual shift. Soon he would consider Henri Bergson to be their preeminent leader, his philosophy supplanting that of August Comte which had proved irrelevant. The counter-positivistic revolution generated by Bergson in Western philosophy, with his emphasis on the intuitive, the non-empirical, and the anti-rationalistic, had occurred early in the century. Haykal, who had certainly read Bergson earlier,[59] now rediscovered him – perhaps after Bergson was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1927[60] – at a time when he became directly relevant to the Egyptian intellectual's new interests. Of far greater significance, though, was Haykal's need to underpin his antipositivist shift with the theories of a philosopher of Bergson's stature.[61] Nevertheless, the Bergsonian inspiration, while central, was not exclusive. A confluence of intellectual influences, not always discernible, played a role. The most important were, apparently (Haykal did not always specify names), the 'spiritual Easternism' of Romain Rolland,[62] the writings and activities of André Malraux and especially his book *La Tentation de l'Occident* (1926) in which he sought to illustrate the potential contribution of the Eastern civilizations to the West,[63] and perhaps more important, Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* which, after its translation into English (1926), enjoyed extraordinary popularity in European intellectual circles.[64] In addition to these European sources, 'Eastern influences' were also at work: the Hindu philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore (who in 1926 also visited Egypt), and Theosophy.[65]

What was the historical explanation for the West's current spiritual malaise? Haykal, drawing on themes common to these philosophies, examined the processes that hastened the collapse of virtually all the values and principles on which European civilization had been built

since the eighteenth century. To begin with, radical secular atheism had been propounded in the eighteenth century by the Enlightenment philosophers, particularly Voltaire. Rejecting every dogma, they had endeavoured to uproot all forms of religion, which they held to be 'suffused with vanities and superstitions'.[66] This radical secularism was supported by the consequences of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The second value, then, was science, in which people placed their trust 'because it took giant strides [forward] and revealed to them the design of life and the laws of the universe ... [as well as] the meaning of life and the secret of existence ... '[67] Science provided 'solid facts': a sense of absolute and permanent security, and a complete knowledge of empirical and objective truth. Beyond this, science had served as the linchpin for the establishment of the materialistic life, the third major attribute of modern European culture. It was a culture that teemed with technological inventions and achievements, that enjoyed material well-being, luxuries, and possessed means of communication 'that no one had even dreamed of before'.[68] People succumbed to the optimistic belief that science and the materialistic culture could 'solve the whole question of existence itself'.[69] They saw in science the *bond* they yearned for with the universe, 'a bond which afforded security and to which they clung'.[70]

The First World War had played havoc with all such values, principles and ideals. Haykal likened it to a devastating and traumatic earthquake which had destroyed the foundations of post-eighteenth century Western civilization. The philosophers and scientists who had thought that science, secularism, and materialism formed a stable and permanent basis for the modern culture of Europe now felt that their assumptions and beliefs were unfounded. Suddenly they, and everyone they held dear, had been hurled into the inferno of a total world war, as cruel as it was irrational. The horrific and seemingly unending destruction, death and annihilation had made a mockery of the rationalism, humanism, and positivism which had been their guiding light and the basis for the rational planning of a progressive and humane world. Barbarism, bestiality, irrationality, and brutality prevailed. Hope for a better future had been dashed. History itself was disoriented: 'Time seemed no longer to exist, since the past, the present and the future were without meaning.'[71] Futility reigned. Humanity had been ground into dust by the juggernaut of war (its instruments also typical products of science).[72]

The war had given birth to the 'age of the masses'.[73] Not only the philosophers and the scientists, the 'enlightened elite', had been affected by a loss of self-confidence and a growing sense of collective anxiety. Haykal, showing heightened sensitivity to the mentality and feelings of ordinary people, asserted that the pessimistic and apocalyptic outlook produced by the war had penetrated massively even into the fabric of the lower classes in both European and non-European societies.[74] Indeed, from now on Haykal's analysis of the moral crisis afflicting Europe and his proposed solutions were also set within a new social context, derived from his observations of the common people's reaction. Although Haykal conferred a broad, universal meaning on the 'masses', it is clear that he referred specifically to the Egyptian society of the late 1920s.

Haykal described two forms of alienated response to the moral crisis. The first was of those groups which had experienced accelerated processes of modernization, secularization, and urbanization. Uprooted from their traditional structures and value-systems, they were powerfully exposed to new ideas such as freedom and progress 'of which they had previously been deprived'.[75] At the same time, they had a very limited capacity to appropriate the new ideas and practices and accommodate them to their own way of life in order to cushion the shocks of modernization. In fact, soon after temporarily and superficially embracing the new ideas, they despaired of the possibility that freedom and progress might bring them well-being and happiness. Instead, they were seized by the pessimistic feeling that 'the chains of freedom are no less oppressive than the shackles of the old religious traditions [which they had forsaken]'.[76] The second form of alienated response was manifested by those popular groups which felt more deeply bound by their ties with their past and with their traditional mores. They dreaded and rejected the modern ideals and practices of freedom and progress. Yet such were the traumas and dislocations of modernization that even though they 'remained bound by the shackles of the past', they could no longer draw from those traditional patterns the same security and strength as they had in the pre-modern age.[77] Thus, both of these popular groups developed a profound sense of 'anxiety' (*qalaq*), loss of confidence, and cultural alienation which could also be found among the enlightened elite, albeit for other reasons.[78]

The world war had exacerbated the crisis of modernity among the masses and heightened their awareness (and the elite's) of its

pervasiveness. Beyond this, the war had demonstrated that the breakdown of positivism and the ensuing moral chaos reflected a more general crisis of modernism (according to the European model of progress) and of the ordinary person's self-adaptability.[79] This 'pervasive anxiety', now shared by all segments of society, was, Haykal found, sharply aggravated by two additional sociocultural factors. The first was what he called 'the deep mental and psychological abyss dividing the scientists and intellectuals, on the one hand, from the masses and the common people on the other hand'.[80] Haykal, expressing a developing awareness of the popular mind, and addressing issues which were of immediate relevance to the political and intellectual situation in Egypt, explained that the 'natural way' in human societies was for the educated elite to lead the masses. The latter, accepting that 'the elite alone are the guardians of the truth and have a profound knowledge of it',[81] follow in complete trust and faith the course marked out by the elite. The elite, for its part, was obliged to behave justly and decently towards the masses.[82] However, should the elite deviate from and contradict the truth in which the masses trust, 'then the masses [will] cease to believe in the truth which the scientists espouse.'[83] A 'rift between them' will be generated. The people will lose their confidence in the guiding elite, and the elite will lose their authority towards the people.[84]

Haykal's second factor was directly related to the first. It involved the collapse of deeply rooted belief-systems and patterns of behaviour of broad sectors of society in an age of rapid modernization. The masses, for generations accustomed to follow the path staked out by the elite, were naturally disposed to receive from it new norms and values, and modern social ideologies and practices. These were supposed to supplant the old system while compensating them for its loss. Generally speaking, the masses at first enthusiastically absorbed the new ideologies: both because they seemed to offer better, more progressive modes of life, and because they were perceived as capable of relieving the severe stresses and strains generated by rapid change.[85] The problem arose when, after being hurled into the assimilating melting pot of modernization, these popular groups discovered that the conceptions and practices espoused by the leading elite were incompatible with their own expectations, world views, and norms of behaviour. From their point of view, the elite ideologies were dysfunctional to the specific conditions of both the place and the

time they were meant to serve.[86] Consequently, they felt deprived; the cornucopia of scientific and technological innovations available in the modern era remained, for social and economic reasons, beyond their reach.[87] In the next stage, the masses felt acutely deceived and dispossessed by a leading elite now perceived as despotic and corrupt. The scientists and intellectuals were accused of being 'depraved purveyors of injustice'.[88] The gap between the elite and the masses deepened, their mutual alienation and mistrust becoming a central component of modern life. More generally, its effect was to intensify the worldwide 'psychological anxiety' (*al-qalaq al-nafsani*).[89]

As we suggested earlier, Haykal's rather universalistic view of the human condition encompassed Egyptian society. He gave cogent expression to the growing sense which he and his associates (in the Liberal Constitutionalist Party and among intellectual circles in general) felt that an unconscionable disparity had been created between the political and intellectual elite and broad popular social groups of the Egyptian society. The mass strata had developed feelings of alienation and mistrust towards the leading elite. The cause of the gap was the attempt by the elite (during the 1920s) to imbue the society with modern secular ideologies and practices which were saliently Western-oriented. These had proved to be unworkable. The popular strata were neither able nor willing to accept secular, 'foreign' cultural products. The elite's attempt to disseminate the 'alien' products produced a growing sense of deprivation among the masses and increasing estrangement from what they perceived as the 'detached elite'. As the role of the lower strata in Egyptian social and political life became more crucial, the alienation deepened.[90]

Haykal's gradually emerging response involved an incipient revision of the elitist strategy towards the masses, and more specifically towards the new educated urban middle strata (the *effendiyya*). The idea was to transmit intellectual messages differently and imbue them with new content; to discard the patronizing approach which sought to educate and train the masses in the methods and conceptions of the 'high scientific culture' which was supposed to 'elevate' them to the level of the enlightened elite. In the historical conditions of late-1920s Egypt, this mode of activity proved to be dysfunctional and counterproductive. The new strategy, then, was to transmit the intellectual message through popular forums of discourse, drawing on language, rhetoric, and a system of values, contents and images

which would appeal to the mass groups. This was a 'step downward' in an effort to reduce the gap and forge a form of common culture which could be shared by the elite and the masses.[91]

A major component in the new strategy was the principle that 'the East' and 'Eastern civilization' must again assume a paramount and immanent role in the course of human history. Mankind, having endured the severe earthquake of the First World War, and suffering from 'general psychological distress', needed mental forces and spiritual ideals no longer obtainable from the materialistic European civilization. That waning civilization, built on a radical secular atheism which had declared war on God and worshipped a materialistic and scientific world view, could no longer offer humanity a new and redemptive spiritual vision. This was now the destiny of the East, reawakening after a prolonged dormancy.[92]

In articulating his new Easternist orientation, Haykal was not entirely original. He was intensively reworking Easternist themes and motifs which had been available in Egypt's intellectual arena for some decades. He was well acquainted with the thought and writings of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Adib Ishaq, Abdallah al-Nadim, Jurji Zaydan, Mustafa Kamil, and Farah Antun, and with the diverse Easternist orientations they had developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[93] A more immediate influence was the literary and intellectual activity of the Eastern Bond (al-Rabita al-Sharqiyya) in the 1920s. With the publication, in 1928, of *Majallat al-Rabita al-Sharqiyya* (edited by Ali Abd al-Raziq) as the principal mouthpiece of the Eastern Bond, the impact became even more pronounced.[94] But Haykal also injected into the Easternist discourse something uniquely his own: he shaped that discourse in the distinctive terms of the late 1920s by investing it with a special meaning, giving it a powerful antipositivist charge, underscoring its affinity with the shifting European intellectualism, and in general imbuing it with a more coherent and assertive character.[95]

Armed with this new Easternism, Haykal now declared that 'the awakening East will revive also the age of faith' (*'asr al-iman*) which would supersede the West's 'age of science'. The East alone, by virtue of its spiritual potential and its latent moral resources, could imbue the West, and all mankind, with the new spiritual inspiration for which it thirsted. It would provide a 'new light' (*al-nur al-jadid*) to restore the cultural security and certainty, the social stability and moral

optimism which mankind had lost.[96]

It should come as no surprise, Haykal explained, that 'a group of Western thinkers and scientists is today turning to the East, to its creeds and its philosophies.'[97] After all, they were only rediscovering the spiritual qualities which had always been manifest in the East. The East had been the 'cradle of inspiration' (*mahd al-wahy*) or the 'right path of inspiration' (*hudan al-ilham*). The East was the origin of the religious renaissance and of prophecy (*manbat al-adyan*), it was the 'source of the spiritual revivals' (*maba'th al-nahdat al-ruhiyya*).[98] Moses, Jesus and Muhammad had all emerged from the East. From the East their message had gone forth to all mankind. Buddha, Brahma and Confucius disseminated their creeds in the East.[99] In Haykal's view, however, it was the Arab East in particular, with Egypt as its leader, which had been the primary spiritual wellspring from which human cultures had drunk. 'In Egypt the first religions since the age of mythology were revealed. From there they spread to Phoenicia, Greece, and Rome; to Assyria and Central Asia.'[100] It was from Egypt that Moses set out for his encounter with God, it was in Jerusalem that Jesus had preached his gospel, and it was in Mecca that the divine word was revealed to Muhammad. Only 'these sacred lands' – Egypt and the surrounding Arab regions – had since the dawn of human existence served as the birthplace of the 'sacred universal truth'.[101] And just as in the past this 'truth' (*al-haqq*) had gone out from the East 'to illuminate the world' and redeem it, so Haykal believed it could shine forth anew, to become the source of inspiration for a new global revolution that would unite all mankind in a new faith grounded in justice, truth, and happiness.[102]

The new 'faith' and the new 'spiritual inspiration' that were supposed to re-emerge from the East did not necessarily contradict reason and science. They were not intended to supplant science and rational free inquiry but to supplement and reinforce them. Haykal's intention, although not always successful, was to persuade his readers that the 'spiritual truth' he sought in the East could and should coexist with the 'scientific truth' which originated in the West.[103] However, he now rejected science as a supreme absolute value purporting to establish exclusively the modern reality and the way to self-fulfilment. Science was redefined as a relative, dependent value, destined to be assimilated as a legitimate element within the new spiritualistic paradigm.[104] Furthermore, Haykal stressed that the 'new spirituality' would

synthesize science and faith, the Western scientific culture and the Eastern spiritual culture.[105] Nor was it in the West alone that atheism, materialism, and the belief in the exclusivity of science had generated a severe moral crisis which cried out for the new synthesis. The East, too, which was in dire need of revival and rehabilitation to thrust it into the modern age, yearned for Western science and the scientific method as an essential instrument with which to effect that revival.[106]

Haykal analysed in depth the 'dramatic processes' of revival and renewal which the Eastern nations were undergoing since the First World War. This was the main theme of his second article, 'The East in the Era of its Revival'.[107] Haykal discerned in the rapid awakening (*ba'ath*, *nahda*) among the Eastern peoples a genuine desire for progress and modernity. Concurrently, there were manifestations of a powerful yearning to revive the East's ancient cultural heritage. The emphasis was on the East's capacity to implement a useful fusion between reason and emotion, science and faith, modern and traditional. The *tajdid* – Haykal's key word to signify reform and modernization – would not materialize solely through the emulation of Western science and technology. These no longer possessed the only key to change. Nor should the *tajdid* be construed as radical secularism or atheism, since those principles had also failed to actuate the kind of modernization that could bring happiness to man and society.[108] By the same token, Haykal also rejected the possibility that the *tajdid* would be realized through a return to traditionalist modes of life, by 're-enslavement to the shackles of the past'. He found an inherent rivalry between the *tajdid* and the 'traditional' and 'reactionary'.[109]

Just as Haykal strove to dissociate the *tajdid* from non-belief ('there is absolutely no connection between the *tajdid* and atheism [*ilhad*]'),[110] so he contrasted it with conservatism and traditionalism. Underlying this position was a defined political goal: to repulse the contemporary attacks of his adversaries, who tried to stigmatize Haykal, his party, and other modernist intellectuals as 'atheists' and thus to anathemize them as 'anti-Eastern' and 'anti-Muslim'.[111] Haykal, for his part, lashed out at the impotence and anachronism of the religious establishment and the conservative political forces associated with it. He accused them of being 'the enemies of progress and freedom'.[112] He called for the elimination of *jumud* (stagnation) and for complete liberation 'from the bonds of the old and the archaic'.[113] He also reiterated his stand that only a true symbiosis between the science and scientific culture

of the West and the spiritual heritage of the Eastern cultures would enable *tajdid* to materialize.[114]

Haykal believed that the 'movements of renewal and reform' which had arisen in the Eastern nations in order to bring them modernity and restore their cultural heritage, had become a dominant force. The wheel of history could not be reversed; the 'spirit of revolution' had reached even the masses, 'who aspire to a new life'.[115] Seized by the 'new spirit of change and modernity', they had 'turned their back on the reactionaries'.[116] Evidently, Haykal was suggesting that 'Easternism', which offered a synthesis between authenticity and modernity, identity and progress, could resolve the general moral crisis of human society. It was also the basis for resuming a fruitful dialogue between the elite and the masses, an ideological lever for narrowing the gap between them. Furthermore, Easternism and the fostering of Easternist orientations could form the foundation for a common culture to be shared by both the elite and the more popular strata of society.[117] Because it possessed all these 'assets', the East and its spiritual civilization were destined 'to carry out their great and sacred mission'.[118] They must serve as the source of inspiration for the spiritual deliverance of all mankind and the ideal basis for actuating modernization and progress.[119] In this context, Haykal called for a new form of genuine and equal cooperation between West and East: between Western reason and science and the prodigious achievements they had given civilization, and the faith and spirit of 'the lofty cultural heritage of the East'.[120]

At the end of 1928, Haykal took another significant step towards articulating the premises and rhetoric of Easternism. The thrust of the new approach was evident in the very title Haykal chose for an essay he published in December 1928 in both *Majallat al-Rabita al-Sharqiyya* and *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya*: 'The Civilization of the East: When Will it Be Reborn in Order to Dissipate the Darkness of Western Civilization?'[121] With growing confidence and assertiveness, Haykal concluded that Western civilization, relying on the flawed paradigm of the 'absolute potency of science', had made its entire development contingent on material achievements and industrial luxuries, and had engendered an extreme atheism. The result was that it had become a nihilistic and ahuman system and had doomed itself to decadence, enervation, and perdition. Almost all the values and principles on which this civilization had been built in the modern age

had collapsed. The fundamental assumptions of the 'positivists' – Comte, Taine, Renan – who espoused a philosophy, of which Haykal himself had been an ardent exponent, holding that science could penetrate the human soul, solve the 'riddles of the universe', and unlock their secrets, had proved unrealistic and illusory. The world war and the ensuing dislocation of European societies had called into question the ability of science to act as a panacea for all the problems of humanity.[122] For the first time, Haykal embraced Herbert Spencer's concept of the 'unknowable', henceforth a constant theme in his writings. Following Spencer, he postulated the existence of a realm of the 'unknowable' which was beyond the reach of the rational mind. Only through faith was this 'hidden domain' accessible – reason or empirical scientific knowledge were unavailing.[123]

Haykal re-emphasized the strong influence upon him of recent intellectual developments in Europe. Even the scientists, he noted, rejected the naive and mechanistic postulates of Comte, Taine, and Renan about the omnipotence of science. They were convinced that 'every civilization must possess a soul [*ruh*] and faith [*iman*]'.[124] In a new reading of Taine and Comte, Haykal now maintained that the two had turned away from a total reliance on science and reason to seek spiritual guidance. Comte's shift was especially significant. In Haykal's interpretation, Comte 'was first among the scientists to grasp [the importance of the spirit and of spiritual inspiration]; therefore he linked to his scientific philosophy his "religion of humanity" [*diyanat al-insaniyya*] to serve as the spirit of the life of the masses and as their faith.'[125] Haykal revered Comte for apprehending that the role of the science-oriented intellectual was also to supply a common spiritual basis for the elite and the masses.[126]

Of even greater importance to Haykal in this process was Henri Bergson, who would now become his new 'guru'. Haykal admired Bergson as the leader of the 'spiritualists' (*al-ruhaniyun*) of the late 1920s who realized that science had failed to provide anything like a complete answer to the basic problem of 'the bond [*al-sila*] between the individual and the society and the whole universe'.[127] The 'spiritualists' admitted that 'if one wished to solve this problem, one must have access to intuitive spiritual inspiration [*ilham*]'.[128] Furthermore, to Haykal, Bergson's 'spiritualism' was of immediate relevance to the problem of the chasm between the elite and the masses. His reliance on 'inspiration' and 'intuition' was perceived as offering a

solution based on the 'simple (and common) truth'. Potentially, this approach could 'represent the spirit of the masses and the common people', and thereby become 'the foundation of a new culture'.[129] In Haykal's portrayal, then, Bergson could provide the new philosophical tenets with which he and the elite could communicate with the masses and together with them create a desired common culture.[130]

Yet there was more to the new intellectual 'climate of opinion' that prevailed in Europe than an abstract demand for a return to 'spiritual faith' and 'intuitive inspiration'. Haykal singled out the East and its cultures as the exclusive source for such inspiration. Somewhat arbitrarily, perhaps, he read Bergsonian spiritualism as positing 'Easternism' to be a belief-system capable of giving the world both a way out of its moral crisis and a source with which to forge a new cultural system common to both the elite and the masses. Haykal indeed reaffirmed the unique role accruing to the East in the modern age. From the East would shine forth 'the light that will illuminate the darkness of the fading Western civilization'.[131] He was convinced that 'this form of thought' – turning to the East in the search for spirit and faith – was not confined to a handful of Western scientists and philosophers. It represented 'the thrust of the general line of thought that has emerged lately in Europe'. It recognized that 'science is incapable of supplying spiritual sustenance to the Western peoples'.[132] As a result, 'these peoples have no choice but to seek this nourishment in the East, in its philosophical schools and its religions'.[133] In the Eastern-oriented religious movements that were flourishing in America and Europe, such as the Baha'i school or the disciples of Buddha and Brahma 'who wish to establish the unity of existence [*wahdat al-wujud*] on a groundwork of spiritual-intuitive inspiration', in the Theosophist movement which also aimed for 'spiritual ideals', and in the Indian philosophies, Haykal found diverse manifestations of the spiritual wave that was sweeping the West.[134] Such popular movements, he believed, represented an authentic expression of a general 'inner thirst' for the spiritual and the intuitive, once the failure of science was admitted.[135]

Haykal championed that vogue and identified with it. The East, he maintained, was an eternal 'source of inspiration' (*masdar wahy*) for humanity.[136] Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Confucianism, and Baha'i – all were 'Eastern faiths and creeds'[137] which had been propounded and disseminated by 'Eastern prophets'. Never

had the West produced a 'prophet' or a 'visionary' who had enriched civilization with a universal religion or message of the kind that had emanated from the East.[138] The East's spiritual superiority over the West was therefore manifest and immanent in human history. Even the Europeans conceded as much nowadays. Europeans and Egyptians who were aware of the flawed nature of Western civilization, which was 'devoid of the spiritual beyond its material element' because of 'its blind submission to economistic schools of thought', were convinced that the world was experiencing the birth pangs 'of a new life which will unavoidably be born'.[139] The world will be delivered 'by a new light which will eclipse the light of [Western] nihilism. The emergence of this light is imminent. It will blaze forth from the East.'[140]

Despite the tendency of this major turn towards communal self assertion steeped in an apologetic tone, Haykal was hardly espousing Eastern ethnocentrism or chauvinism. He constantly recognized basic advantages which the West had over the East and which could not be ignored. The West has always been a source of 'prodigious dynamism': the Greeks were an abundant wellspring of wisdom, science, and philosophy which became the foundation of modern European civilization. No such source was available to the East.[141] Haykal mapped a vision of unity and harmony between East and West grounded in humane values. Under the clear influence of the Indian philosopher and poet Rabindrinath Tagore, he preached a universal brotherhood which would synthesize the East's wisdom and spirit with the West's dynamism and material productivity. Again, the intuitive essence of the East and the scientific character of the West must fuse in order to extricate humanity from its current malaise. This cooperation and harmonious yet pluralistic unity held out the promise of achieving happiness for all mankind and of becoming the basis for humanity to regain its lost cultural security and confidence.[142]

A few months after publishing these two key articles, Haykal provided further confirmation of his continuing intellectual transformation. His platform this time consisted of two articles that appeared in consecutive issues of *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya*: the first, titled 'Faith and Science', in the April 1929 issue,[143] and the second, published the following month, called 'Reason and Spirit: The Need for Their Cooperation to Erect Civilization'.[144]

The first of the pair was actually a literary critique of the most

recent novel by Georges Duhamel, *La nuit d'orage*, a copy of which Haykal had received as a personal gift from the author. In February 1929, Haykal had been sufficiently impressed by a series of lectures delivered by Duhamel at the American University of Cairo to contact him and form a personal relationship. Haykal found in *La nuit d'orage* themes identical to those which had preoccupied him for some time, what he called 'the struggle between the arrogance of science and the weakness of superstition'.[145]

The novel's protagonist is a young Frenchman brought up to believe in the omnipotence of science and 'to feel contempt for faith'.[146] Following a lacerating personal experience, he acknowledges the innate limitations of science and the immanent power of faith to penetrate the hidden world. As Haykal interprets it, the novel ends with the protagonist understanding that 'the weakness of superstition is, in fact, stronger than the arrogance of science' and that 'the hidden which we cannot apprehend [with our rational faculty] has a greater impact on our mental life than the science we can apprehend'.[147] Again, though, Haykal does not completely dismiss the achievements of science in improving humanity's material situation: 'The truth is that science revealed many facts about life and enabled us to derive pleasure from the conveniences it produced in a manner previously unimaginable.'[148] Yet science has failed to provide an adequate solution for man's emotional existence, nor is scientific knowledge by itself conducive to true happiness. It must be recognized, Haykal contended, that the realm of 'the hidden' (*al-ghaib*) plays a powerful role in shaping man's inner life and that science cannot conquer that realm or decipher its secrets. Hence, one must acknowledge the 'crucial importance' of the occult: its autonomous being and pivotal role, together with reason, in determining the essence of human life.[149] Haykal repeated his argument that only through faith could one cope with the 'hidden', the 'unknowable'. The faculty of reason or empirical scientific knowledge were unavailing. 'In our view,' he concluded, 'faith and science are not necessarily mutually contradictory.' For the human soul needed both, even if faith at times should fall to the debased level of 'delusion, fancy [*wahm*] and superstition [*khurafa*]'. There would always remain in the human soul an irremediable weakness that causes it to seek happiness in intuitive and irrational faith.[150]

Haykal's second article, 'Reason and Spirit', opened with a revealing admission: 'I feel today,' he wrote, 'that my former hypothesis – that

experimental science possesses the absolute ability to propose a solution for all the riddles of existence, and that because of this power [science] will inevitably replace faith in human societies – no longer bears the same status of conviction and certainty that it once did in my youth."[151] This unambiguous statement, made by Haykal himself in May 1929, forcefully sums up the first stage of the intellectual transformation he had been undergoing since 1927. But what makes the article distinctly important for our purposes, is Haykal's attempt to justify the shift in his outlook by adducing a new factor: what he described as his growing awareness of the impact exerted by the early civilizations, 'and above all by the pharaonic civilization', on human history.[152] His knowledge of pharaonic civilization, Haykal wrote, and of the succeeding Eastern and Islamic civilizations, compelled him now to acknowledge that the secret of their cultural efflorescence could not be understood solely in empirical scientific terms. Haykal advanced two central arguments concerning the proper understanding of these civilizations in general and the pharaonic in particular. In the first place, belief-systems and not only material skills or technological tools underlay the vast collective endeavour of ancient Egyptian society. This 'spiritual dimension' accounted for the immense inner forces that society had mustered. They enabled it to produce 'gigantic monuments' which had withstood the rigours of time, were immune to the 'laws of decay', and 'serve to this day, as they will for thousands of years to come, as testimonies to the civilization that built these everlasting monuments'.[153]

Second, a proper historical representation of the pharaonic era and its monumental achievements could not be achieved by rational means alone, utilizing only empirical scientific tools and methods. Imagination, intuition, and an awareness of the power of the hidden and the irrational to unravel the mysteries and astounding accomplishments of these early civilizations were prerequisites for acquiring the necessary skills to understand and explain the 'essence of the greatness and glory of the pharaohs'.[154] Thus, according to Haykal, both the activity of 'the dead' – the pharaohs themselves – in the remote past, and the present-day activity undertaken by 'the living' to understand and memorialize the past required, then as now, 'faith' and 'spirit'.[155]

Taking a broader perspective of the 1920s, it is important to realize that Haykal, who at the beginning of the decade and even in its middle

years, sought to link Pharaonism and the study of ancient Egypt to science, to Comtian positivism and to Taine's environmental determinism, now embarked in a new direction more commensurate with his changed outlook. He tried to fathom and explain the pharaohs, their beliefs, and their deeds by applying the new principles of 'intuition', the 'hidden', and 'faith'. For Haykal, pharaonism and its associated territorial nationalism became the basis for refuting the notion of the all-embracing power of science and justifying his new 'spiritualism'. The pharaonic myth and its innate irrational elements were an effective tool towards liberation from scientific positivism and adoption of the religiosity and spiritualism intrinsic to Easternism.[156]

Haykal relates that in the same year (1929) he visited Upper Egypt 'for the third time' – the tombs of the pharaonic kings, the temples, the palaces, and the other monuments of the New Kingdom located between Luxor and Aswan. The renewed encounter with the 'graves of the founding fathers' rekindled in him admiration and amazement at their accomplishments. It reaffirmed his conviction of their unrivalled universal contribution to human development and progress. However, the mode through which he might apprehend these 'secrets of greatness' and decipher their essence had altered. He intuited that for him the pharaonic monuments were becoming a major source of inspiration reinforcing his realization that science had failed in its promise to unlock the secrets of man and the universe.[157]

The change in his approach was more complex, however. On the one hand, Haykal was convinced that science and technology, and in particular a knowledge of engineering, geometry, and astronomy had been the pharaohs' basic tools 'for the erection of these wonders'.[158] The pyramids, temples, palaces, tombs, sculptures, and magnificent works of art 'which to this day scientists have not ceased to marvel at' – all had been created and perpetuated with the aid of science.[159] It was equally clear to Haykal that the pharaohs' world view, their way of life, and their perception of existence reflected, in part, an empirical 'positivist approach' based on universal scientific principles resembling 'the scientific principles and the method which Descartes had propounded and which succeeding scientists reorganized and refined'. Science and the scientific mentality also helped account for the lifelike precision and pronounced realism of pharaonic art.[160]

Yet Haykal was also realizing that the pharaonic monuments, and

especially the fine drawings and sculptures that incarnated the character and way of life of the ancient Egyptians, reflected deeply rooted belief systems. Science and scientific tools, with all their importance in the pharaonic civilization, could not have forged the 'spirit' and the 'faith' which informed these masterpieces. On this point, Haykal felt a deep closeness and identity with the pharaonic creators: 'They felt the hidden forces [*quwan al-ghaib*] then, just as we sense them nowadays, and human science, then as now, was incapable of describing and comprehending them or uncovering their laws.'[161] Haykal went on to compare the pharaohs' pragmatic attitude towards the 'unknown' with the dismissive, hence inhumane, attitude of the 'dogmatic positivists' in his own generation. It was to the credit of the ancient Egyptians, he concluded, that they had neither disregarded nor tried to ignore those forces, 'as we disregard and try to forget them'.[162] On the contrary, the ancients had acknowledged that 'man's brief life embodies the unknowable as much as it represents the factual and knowable'.[163] They realized that man's soul required the 'inspiration of the hidden' no less than his senses and his reason needed a 'true and accurate picture of reality'.[164]

This new representation of ancient Egypt served Haykal as a basis for rearticulating more fully and assertively his antipositivist stand. The notion of the ineptitude of science, clearly revealed in the 'first human civilization', was now shared by many contemporary Western philosophers, 'in the forefront of whom are the theories of the great French philosopher Henri Bergson'.[165] Bergsonism, with which Haykal now seemed to identify completely, recognized that the long-desired historical stage in which 'science was supposed to discover everything in the universe and subject it to our senses and perceptions' – in other words, the 'scientific positivist stage' in Comte's three-staged scheme – 'will not materialize in the near future'.[166] Furthermore, Haykal, well on the way to discarding positivism altogether, argued that given the real situation of the world and the human condition, the positivist stage was purely utopian. It could be realized only when utopia materialized, namely when 'human beings evolve into another [more advanced] stage in which they will possess higher and more potent senses and powers of understanding than they have today ... or when humanity assumes a new and different form from that which we know or that our ancestors and forefathers knew for thousands of years.'[167] From this perspective, 'faith', 'spirit', 'the unknown', 'superstition' –

everything the positivists anticipated would be consigned to oblivion in the scientific era – were now, in Haykal's Bergsonian paradigm, concrete human powers. Anchored deep in human experience, they were essential to man's life, to society and culture in all places and at all times, be it the ancient Egyptians, the various cultures of the East, or modern Western civilization.[168]

Haykal concluded by asserting that, together with reason and science, man, society, and culture require 'that sense which Bergson defined as inspiration or intuition [*al-ilham*], what religions knew as insight [*al-basira*] or the light [*al-nur*] or divine guidance'.[169] Intellectuals, scientists, and even exponents of popular ideologies in the West, realized the limitations of science. They understood that the positivist stage lay in the realm of the supranatural and the utopian. Courageously, they concluded that the scientific and rationalist foundations of Western civilization, as originated by the ancient Greeks, were insufficient to support the burden of modernity. Today it was universally acknowledged that in order 'to prevent the deterioration and disintegration' of modern civilization, 'there is no choice but to enlist new spiritual aid ... from the East'. In the religions, faiths and philosophies of the East, 'in the hidden and intuitive forces sequestered in them', Western civilization and indeed all mankind will find deliverance.[170]

Faith (*al-iman*), unlike science, is a social force. Broadly shared, faith can fuse individuals and collectives, elite and non-elite groups, into a single cohesive social community. 'We must strive for a faith which will constitute a social reality,' Haykal wrote. 'For without faith societies cannot exist. Faith is therefore a social reality [*haqiqa ijtima'iyya*] which is discernible at all times and in all places ...'[171] Pursuing this line of thought, Haykal introduced another central tenet into his shifting world view: the concept of the 'supreme ideal' (*mathal a'la*) which, he believed, every human community must cultivate as a guiding vision to infuse the group with hope and a sense of purpose for a better future.[172] The popular sectors of society were especially in need of such a visionary ideal, since it could take their minds off life's torment and pain. According to Haykal, the more severe the cultural and psychological shocks a society suffered in the wake of rapid modernization, the more desperately it needed a 'guiding supreme ideal'. Neither reason nor science could provide that communal vision. By definition, 'a supreme ideal is never the aspiration of science, whose

whole purpose is to arrive at the empirical truth'. In contrast to reason and science, religion and religious faith, by positing 'the world to come as an object of sublime hope and lofty expectation', provided human society 'in a natural manner' with the supreme ideal it coveted.[173]

Where this central principle was concerned, Haykal found no difference between the various religions. All envisioned the 'next world' as 'a paradise that compensates for all the travails and sufferings of life [in this world]'.[174] It was expressly the lower strata of the society that inherently needed such 'compensation'. Science's failure to penetrate the unknown, illuminate it, and render it accessible had only heightened further the yearning of the human soul in general and of society's mass broad sectors in particular for a supreme ideal deriving its inspiration from the religion specific to each culture.[175] In other words, Haykal admitted explicitly that religion and religious faith were an innate social need. Hence, the expectation of positivism that in the modern reality religion would disappear was as misguided as it was utopian. This too was of special relevance to the masses: their happiness could not be achieved by the power of science or reason but only through faith and religion.[176]

It is important to keep in mind that Haykal, at this stage, was not referring explicitly to Islam. His approach to spirituality, to faith, and to religiosity was Easternist in the broad cultural sense, not narrowly Islamic. Furthermore, when Haykal dealt with specific religions, he emphasized the need of each society to derive spiritual guidance, including religious faith, from its own historical legacy in order to serve mass aspirations. It was in this context that Haykal seemed to be still seeking inspiration from pharaonic religion (*al-diyana al-fir 'awniyya*).[177] This faith was the natural reservoir from which to draw a spiritual 'supreme ideal' for present-day Egyptian society. Furthermore, still under the influence of the pharaonic myth, he believed that the spiritual-religious reservoir of ancient Egypt could and should serve as inspiration for the whole of human society. The modern-day thrust to merge 'reason and spirit' should model itself on the exemplary harmony between science and faith which reached perfection in the pharaonic civilization; contemporary society and culture, in their quest for religious faith, should look to the way in which the pharaonic faith served as the spiritual underpinning for the creation of the 'monumental and everlasting civilization' of ancient Egypt.[178]

The Causes of Intellectual Change: Text, Context, Intention, and Meaning

Why did this intellectual change occur? Why just in this period? What motivated Haykal? In an attempt to answer these questions, we shall examine three relevant contexts which might explain this intellectual transformation. First, the sociopolitical changes which took place in Egypt in the late 1920s; second, the shifting European intellectualism and its impact on Haykal; and third, the Easternist 'community of discourse', and the connection between its 'discursive practices' and the change experienced by Haykal. We shall argue that only through an examination of all three contexts, the recovery of Haykal's intentions for producing the texts within these contexts, and decoding the meanings intended by the author himself can we attempt a more accurate interpretation of the causes for the intellectual change under discussion.[179]

Charles Smith, to whom we are indebted for uncovering 'the social basis of Haykal's new attitude towards religion',[180] is inclined to explain the intellectual shift in saliently instrumental-utilitarian terms. His principal argument is that Haykal's shift was tactical and not strategic. Haykal's 'populist' turn, his realization 'that the intellectual would have to deal with the masses on their terms rather than his own,'[181] is presented by Smith as the adoption of a new means to guarantee the attainment of the previous goals. Through the instrumental utilization of Easternist, spiritualist, and religious sentiments, and by developing a popular form of discourse with the masses, Haykal set out to placate the powerful religious opposition that was emerging in the Egyptian sociopolitical arena, most forcefully among the new urban masses.[182] Essentially, despite a few reservations over the effectiveness of positivism in its mechanistic and totalistic form, Smith's interpretation implies that Haykal did not forsake the principles of that philosophy. He continued to consider scientific culture, rationalism, and secularism as indispensable elements for a discourse of the elite. Therefore, '[s]pirituality could be secular for the elite.'[183] For the masses, however, spirituality 'had to incorporate religious faith to become a social reality which the populace would accept. The latter required the solace religion gave them to be able to endure life's burdens.'[184] In other words, if the intellectual wished to communicate with the masses, he had to adopt, at the tactical level only, populist spiritual-religious (and irrational) rhetoric as the basis for a different (non-elitist) discourse with them.[185]

Looking at the intellectual change from the broader perspective of the late 1920s and the 1930s, Smith (who, as mentioned above, tends to read the earlier works in the terms of the later) states that ultimately, Haykal believed that through these tactical manipulations he and his party, the Liberal Constitutionalists, would succeed in mobilizing these popular groups to support their own political objectives. It was, in Smith's words, a mere '*readjustment of terminology* which reflected the intensification of religious involvement in the political arena ... and the Liberal Constitutionalists' attempt to use it for their own purposes.'[186] Thus, the discursive change was intended only to ensure the continuity and integrity of the intellectual message: to preserve and promote Haykal's 'traditional' modernist strategy. In developing the discourse with the masses, the intellectual will be able to secure his individual independence of thought and freedom of expression. In this way he can still cling to the scientific and rationalist paradigm as the exclusive basis for society's progress and modernization.[187]

In the useful methodology of Quentin Skinner, one could say that Smith arrives at this instrumentalist reading of Haykal's shift because he recovers the author's intention in writing what he writes (the texts) and from this decodes their meaning mainly within a tactical and manipulative explanatory scheme. '[T]he new political atmosphere ... demanded dissimulation and alteration [by Haykal] of the framework within which reformist programs might be presented.'[188] For Smith, then, Haykal's *intention* to alter the 'framework' and the 'terminology' (as against the content and essence of the message) is the key to a proper understanding of the 'true meaning' of his texts. Haykal partially abandoned positivism and adopted Eastern spiritualism as a cosmetic means, and at times as a mere facade, reflecting no fundamental transformation.[189]

This interpretation leads Smith to argue that Haykal, even when his concepts and outlook manifestly undergo the essential thematic shift described above, continues to accept in principle 'that the elite retained its own belief in the analytical, as opposed to the social, efficacy of scientific principles.'[190] From here Smith proceeds logically to maintain that Haykal ostensibly pinned the whole blame 'for the failure of science to educate the people' not on science or the intellectuals who promote it, but on the masses.[191] Smith rests his case (which is somewhat speculative and elusive) on the more general

assumption that despite his increasing awareness of the need to develop channels of discourse with the masses, '[t]hese considerations did not alter Haykal's *personal belief* in the secular principles he associated with Europe and in the need to isolate Islam from public life.'[192]

Nevertheless, the posture which Smith attributes to Haykal is unsupported by any explicit statement in the latter's texts from this period. The attempt to recover Haykal's intentions solely at the tactical-manipulative level is reductionist and inadequate. The inclination to rely on 'Haykal's personal belief' (as against his public utterances) appears unconvincing, even irrelevant. Indeed, it is precisely these writings, as we shall now attempt to prove, that constitute and mirror, in a manner difficult to mistake, Haykal's gradual but definite intellectual shift. They reveal on Haykal's part a growing self-awareness of the metamorphosis he was experiencing. They also provide a convincing self-explanation of the motives and intentions that underlie and in his view justify the change.

The elaboration of this argument requires us to re-examine the social context of the ideational change. Smith is entirely right to attribute critical importance to that context. The use of the method of the social history of ideas is perfectly justified. The changes in the sociopolitical conditions of Egypt in the late 1920s and early 1930s have been dealt with extensively in academic research.[193] Haykal himself described them lucidly in his detailed political memoirs.[194] They are also mirrored, as noted, in his writings from the period. The 'masses' as a political category gradually occupied a central place in his attitude towards his society. He and his Liberal Constitutionalist Party, with their image as radical secularists and their atheistic label, desperately sought ways to meet the challenge of the new mass politics. Always deeply involved in the social, cultural, literary, and journalistic life of his country, Haykal now deepened his political commitment as well. Recognizing the political power of the new popular groups and their growing importance in determining public opinion, he sought concrete ways to establish a dialogue with them in order to mobilize, control, or dominate them. At the same time, realizing the need to be accepted by them, he concentrated his efforts on creating a common ideological basis for the masses, himself, and his party.[195]

The crux, then, is not the need to examine the social context in order to explain the intellectual change and grasp its proper meaning. This seems self-evident. What is in question is the essence of Haykal's

intention to foment the change. Since we presume 'that a knowledge of the writer's intentions in writing [his texts] ... is not merely relevant, but is actually *equivalent* to a knowledge of what he writes,'[196] the critical issue is what Haykal may have been intending to do in writing what he wrote. In other words, the interpreter's task must be, first, to recover Haykal's intentions, and, second, to know in the specific context of late-1920s Egypt what Haykal meant by writing his texts in a particular manner and infusing them with a specific content.[197] In contrast to Smith, we will argue that Haykal's way of addressing the changing sociopolitical conditions in Egypt and coping with the mounting pressures of mass politics was to bring about a real and substantive change in his intellectual message towards his society. His *intention* was to effect a change at the strategic level, not to resort to rhetorical camouflage just to conceal and defend an unaltered continuity. The broad corpus of texts which he produced in this period was intended on the one hand to legitimize his recantation of earlier strategies (which had failed or had proved disappointing), and on the other hand to articulate theoretically and terminologically a new, alternative strategy, justify it, and transmit it. This was Haykal's genuine intention. From it derives the true meaning of his writings.

Haykal's intentions can in fact be recovered more accurately if we understand their development as the outcome of the dynamics of the mutual feedback between Egypt's shifting political context and Haykal's responses to those fluctuations as an intellectual with growing political interests. As we endeavoured to show, in the late 1920s he became acutely aware that reason and science no longer possessed as much power as spirit and faith to promote positive social change. This went hand in hand with his emerging social awareness, relating not only to the elite and its leading role in the community, but also to society's broader strata and their central place in the modern political culture. Haykal here appears to be referring principally to the new literate urban *effendiyya* groups which had become a major force in shaping the new urban mass politics and culture and in moulding public opinion.[198] In practice, the 'faith' and 'spirituality' whose social necessity Haykal acknowledged could become a real social force and a political tool for mobilization only if imbued with more indigenous Eastern symbols, representations, and sentiments which could effectively speak to the new social groups.

Furthermore, Haykal seemed increasingly to realize that in order

for faith to be transformed into a 'social reality', it must become a concrete 'religious faith'. Only religion could offer that 'visionary supreme ideal' of the 'world to come' and thereby promise the mass of people compensation, consolation, and deliverance for the agony and misery that were their lot in 'this world'. The more central this social consideration became to Haykal's thinking, the more he became aware of the need to reformulate the intellectual message in more Easternist-religious terms. He understood that his reading publics (the targets for his political message) were changing, assuming a new 'mass-oriented' character. To reach them and be relevant to them, intellectuals were constrained to take into account their world views, norms, and 'horizons of expectations'. In other words, they had to shape a popular Eastern-religious discourse which would enable a meaningful dialogue to be conducted between the elite and the masses.[199]

Concurrently, Haykal despaired of his earlier hope that science or reason could be an agent of social change and cultural progress which would also embrace society's lower strata. The education and acculturation of the masses through science – transmitting to them scientific methods and rationalistic practices while inducing them to discard religion – which, it was assumed, would 'elevate' them to a higher cultural level, an expectation Haykal had once cultivated, was clearly no longer a viable option.[200] It followed that to narrow the cultural gap between the intellectual elite and the broader lower strata, now perceived as the *sine qua non* for the modernization and advancement of the Egyptian society, science and reason were insufficient: a common belief-system was required. Intellectuals had to 'go down' to a level from which they could communicate with the masses. They must discard their false expectation that the masses would reach their high level or, alternatively, would remain in their inferior state but would blindly accept an elitist message simply because they acknowledged its 'eternal truth'. To penetrate the popular milieu, to control or mobilize it, meant employing popular rhetoric and mass themes and representations. Hence, intellectuals had an obligation to revise their modernist message, to change its content and its symbols, and to rearticulate it in a functional social mode congruent with the *mentalité* of the broader strata. The adoption of the 'social force' latent in the 'spirituality' and 'religious faith' which underlay the popular *mentalité* was hence indispensable for intellectuals who wished to remain relevant and meaningful for their society.[201]

Haykal was not only thoroughly aware of the urgent need to redefine the intellectual message, he was receptive to change and believed that he and the intellectual elite could foment it. 'Our role,' he stated, 'is to vouchsafe to the human societies a supreme vision to which human faith will be disposed and will be bound, and through which it can hope to achieve the happiness it longs for.'[202] In other words, Haykal allocated to the intellectual elite the role of producing a modern common literate culture which the masses were no longer supposed to accept passively, 'from the top down', but in the shaping of which they were meant to be active partners while identifying with its symbols and values. This was an act of cultural creation that assumed a two-way dialogue, 'from the top down' and 'from the bottom up' – from the intellectual to the society and, conversely, from the society to the intellectual. The production of such a common culture now appeared to be essential. First, because it alone could ensure the social reception of the intellectual message and improve its prospects of having an impact on society and politics. Second, this mode of culture would assure the progress and modernization of the Egyptian community in its entirety. More concretely, the implication for the intellectual was the invocation, on a massive scale, of Eastern religious symbols, images, norms, and themes in forging this type of widely shared culture.[203]

It is, then, hardly justified to read the change that was wrought in Haykal as an alienated and imposed reaction to the 'rise of the masses' which he, as an intellectual, found threatening and dangerous.[204] If elements for this interpretation exist in several of his responses, the overall change as it unfolded, and as Haykal perceived its evolution, was inevitable and, as such, appropriate and constructive. Haykal expected that the transformation he had brought about in his position would lead to a functional readjustment of his strategy as an intellectual vis-à-vis the developing sociopolitical processes; and that through this new strategy he could effectively and constructively cope with those changes. In other words, he would be able to exploit them to advance both his intellectual goals and his political ambitions.[205] Haykal, to be sure, did not at first anticipate the need for this revision of his strategy. Certainly he had no desire to be overwhelmed by the masses or submit to their whims. He made his choice because he believed that this new road was the only means available to him and his intellectual generation to continue to influence and lead their society.

At the conclusion of Haykal's article 'Reason and Spirit' we find important evidence that he himself assessed his mental shift as a substantive and functional one. Following the sentence cited above, in which he accepted the axiom that 'faith [*al-iman*] ... is an existing social reality at all times and in all places', he added the following crucial passage: 'If a group of persons [meaning, obviously, a group of intellectuals] deviated from it [i.e., from this axiom], then its fate was, and would always be, to remain a small minority [*aqliyya saghira*].' This intellectual minority, Haykal added immediately, 'would never have been able to claim that its attitude towards science could guarantee the happiness of humanity and alleviate the adversities of life that people experience.'[206]

It is perfectly clear from these passages that Haykal was conducting a self-critique and re-evaluation of the previous strategy of the intellectual elite which had failed. He recognized that the underlying reason for the failure of that strategy to 'penetrate' the society was the intellectuals' disregard of the axiom that 'faith is a social reality without which human society cannot exist', together with their abortive attempt to ground the strategy entirely in positivism, science, and rationalism which presuppose the disappearance of 'faith'. In the event, their strategy was revealed to be socially sterile. It overshot the popular dimension of the social milieu to which it was appealing and wished to modify. In other words, it missed the social strata that were its potential target audiences; its appeal was confined to a handful. Equally apparent is Haykal's reluctance to share the fate of an isolated and sterile intellectual minority. Indeed, his whole purpose was to find methods and strategies to enable intellectuals to become involved in the society in order to influence and lead it.[207] Hence, there are no grounds for viewing Haykal's intellectual transformation as anything but substantive and immanent. It was a functional change which was well structured within the changing sociopolitical context of Egypt in the late 1920s.

Nevertheless, an examination of the social context of the intellectual change, with all its importance, does not exhaust the significance of the intellectual change. Nor of Haykal's intentions in fomenting it. For the question still remains why Haykal selected, from all the possible options, Eastern spiritualism and Easternist themes and subjects as the primary discursive system for conveying his new message. If his intention was only to 'seize the masses' (whether tactically or, as we

maintain, strategically), he had available, within the context of late 1920s Egypt, a range of populist ideologies and discursive practices. These were different forms of Arabist orientations,[208] a variety of Salafite Islamic movements,[209] and even a type of local Egyptian nationalism of a more populist and nativist stripe.[210] Each could have been potentially utilized as a 'faith' or 'spirit' with an appeal to society's mass groups. Haykal's choice of 'Easternism' as the new framework for the articulation of the modernist message at that time requires, then, an explanation which goes beyond the social context proper. In this sense, D. La Capra is right to emphasize that 'an appeal to the [material] context does not *eo ipso* answer all questions in reading and interpretation.'[211]

Obviously, one could argue that, at bottom, Haykal's 'Eastern turn' was the result of the strong influence of shifting European intellectualism on his thinking. Johansen and Smith tend to cultivate this view.[212] To examine the validity of this explanation, however, we must look more closely at the role of the European intellectual context in motivating the change in Haykal. On the one hand, it is clear that Haykal's shifting attitudes were constantly fed by powerful and immediate inspirations deriving from fashions of thought and intellectual moods which were prevalent in Europe (especially France). This was especially true concerning the 'crisis' in scientific thought and the scepticism about its omnipotence that was rampant on the Continent. On the other hand, it is equally clear that Haykal systematically selected features and themes of European intellectualism which corresponded to his own intellectual needs. The particular interpretation he placed (or imposed) on European thought was manifestly intended to be instrumental in articulating his new stands and vesting them with legitimacy. This instrumentalist appropriation should be seen as an ongoing endeavour by Haykal to ensure that the change he was fomenting was grounded in unimpeachable authorities. Smith himself appears to confirm this at one point, when he states that Haykal 'now attributed to European thinkers the motives which were the bases of his own actions'.[213]

At times, the manner in which Haykal manipulated the European intellectual climate of opinion to advance his goals was flagrantly cynical and arbitrary. Thus he asserted that the interest European thinkers and scientists took in 'spiritual matters' derived from their realization that 'every civilization must have a spirit and a faith' and

that it was their task to provide the masses with common belief systems.[214] In this interpretation, Comte intended his 'religion of humanity' to serve as the basis 'for the spirit and faith of the common people'.[215] The whole purpose of Bergson's 'inspiration' or 'intuition' (*ilham*) was to produce a simple and universally comprehensible system of beliefs which could 'represent the spirit of the masses and the common people'.[216] This same need to offer the masses an 'ideology' and 'spiritual solace', Haykal went on, was what had spurred the European philosophers and scientists to look to the East for spiritual guidance and religious inspiration.[217] Haykal also attributed to Bergson the intention to present to the masses a 'widely shared culture' based on new intuitive-spiritual foundations. He was reading Bergson in the light of his own interests: as one who was destined to forge for his community a new sort of common culture which the masses could share and then, with the elite, to work for the progress and prosperity of the entire society.[218]

Haykal's specific attempt to appropriate European thought in order to create a new 'spiritual Easternist' framework was, in large measure, his own creative enterprise. The philosophers and intellectuals from whose writings he drew inspiration dealt only marginally (if at all) with 'Easternism' in meanings intended and formulated by Haykal. True, his major role model, Bergson, did later include in his writings 'Oriental mysticism' as a component of 'dynamic religion'. Bergson, though, was referring to Buddhism, Brahmanism, and other religious faiths which evolved in India.[219] Similarly, other thinkers, such as Malraux and Rolland, believed the source of the new spiritualism lay in the 'Far East' and not in Haykal's Arab–Islamic (and Egyptian) East.[220] Furthermore, Bergson's antipositivist turn was hardly a new phenomenon in mid-1920s European intellectualism. Bergson had launched his philosophical enterprise, which had such wide reverberations throughout Europe, at the beginning of the century.[221] Haykal, although he had known Bergson's work earlier,[222] rediscovered it, as we saw, in the late 1920s at a time when it became critically useful to him as a source of authority and legitimation. This fact should be taken as the proof that Haykal first decided to change his strategy for reasons connected with the changing sociopolitical context in Egypt, and chose Easternism as the framework for that change, and only afterward selected the European intellectual elements and themes which could justify the transformation. In sum, while the European

context undoubtedly helps us to understand better the mechanisms through which Haykal's intellectual change could have taken place with the support and legitimation of external European intellectual inspiration, it cannot, in itself, account for his adoption of Easternism.

To explain why Haykal opted specifically for the Eastern orientation, we must turn to the context of the Egyptian Easternist discourse. It developed within a defined community of discourse in the 1920s which can be defined as Easternist in character. That community was active throughout the decade; but it was in the late 1920s and the early 1930s that it exerted a relatively strong influence on intellectual and literary circles.[223] Haykal, who at the beginning of the decade had strong reservations about its activity and indeed about the very validity of an Easternist discourse, gradually drew closer to the community towards the end of the decade and effectively became a full partner in its discourse. A good portion of his intellectual generation, including several of his close colleagues who contributed to *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya*, were among this community's leading proponents.[224]

What did Haykal receive from the Easternist community of discourse? What did he take, or could he have taken, from it? That discourse offered him a shared 'paradigm', common presuppositions, a set of hypotheses, and arguments. It defined for him a broad range of attitudes, moods, a shared 'horizon of expectations and imagination', motivations, aspirations, and ideals. The Easternist discourse produced a rich repertoire of discursive practices, representations, rhetoric, terminology, historical narratives, themes, and symbols which by the end of the decade had become an available 'ideology' out of which Haykal could articulate his own Easternist orientation and endow it with a particularist as well as universal meaning. It was the Easternist community of discourse that supplied him with an interpretive framework through which he could respond intellectually and emotionally to the unique experience of his community in this period, identify its flaws, and propose a programme for change. This community also constituted the initial reading public for his Easternist texts, providing essential feedback through which Haykal could gauge the potential public reception. In short, Haykal could have produced a new meaning for the 'East', 'Eastern civilization', and 'Eastern spirituality' only by appropriating and elaborating on the reservoir of meanings which was provided by the Easternist school of thought.[225]

Hence our argument that Haykal's texts, messages, and specific meanings can be decoded and explained only if they are located in the broad textual fabric of the Easternist discourse in the second half of the 1920s.

We have discussed the reciprocal relations between Haykal and the Easternist community of discourse elsewhere.[226] Here we shall limit ourselves to summing up the principal attractions of the Easternist discourse for Haykal.

In the first place, the Easternist discourse was the most immediately accessible ideological option available to Haykal as an intellectual and a politician. Disappointed by positivism, and seeking a different 'spiritual' system informed by intellectual refinement and sophistication, but possessing also social force and the prospect of enjoying a wide public reception, Haykal found in Easternism the most functional solution. Second, Easternism offered a contrasting and alternative culture system to the Western system and to its apparent 'general crisis'. In the face of science it posited faith, against rationalism it espoused intuition, religiosity, and inspiration, and instead of materialism it offered spiritualism. In place of the exclusive hegemony of Western civilization, it adduced the universal vision of mutuality and equal cooperation between East and West. Third, Easternism was a secular 'ideology'. As a secular modernist, Haykal found it to be a proper framework within which he could continue to express his secular outlook, now in a different style and direction. The 'spirituality' and 'religiosity' associated with Easternism did not bring with it an obligation to adopt explicitly Islamic-religious positions. Fourth, Haykal, seeking channels of dialogue with the broad sectors of society, found in Easternism popular themes and subjects which he believed could forge a discursive system shared by him as an intellectual and by those groups as 'masses'. Fifth, Haykal assumed Easternism to be an effective ideological response to the mass politics which increasingly characterized his country's political culture. As an intellectual, but also as a politician, he viewed the adoption of the Eastern orientation as a key for his own and his party's ability to achieve mass mobilization and political survival. Finally, Easternism gave Haykal a broader 'imagined community' in which he and Egypt could find their distinctive identity and anchor it in indigenous cultural sources.

Haykal's disappointment with positivism was associated with disappointment in the (European) scientific model of social progress.

He was increasingly sceptical about the possibility of applying the model in Eastern societies. Already at this early stage he realized that the attempt to modernize Eastern cultures and revive them by means of an effort 'to civilize the East' (*tahdir al-Sharq*) – in other words, 'its regeneration by mere borrowing from Western civilization' – was unworkable.[227] He reached the conclusion that Eastern civilization could renew itself and advance only if it could 'be linked by a powerful bond to its past'; and if it could learn 'to assimilate only those modern elements which deserve to be received, for only they can flourish within it and bear fruit'.[228] In this approach, commonplace in the Easternist discourse of the time, the 'East' and 'Easternism' became a framework for communal self-identity and self-representation: only within it could modernity and authenticity merge and advance.

To sum up, the social context contains the plausible explanation for the formation 'from below' of Haykal's very intention and motivation to foment the intellectual change. The Easternist discursive context contains the explanation 'from above' of why, among all options, Easternism was selected as the framework to cultivate a common discourse and produce the shared meaning most appropriate for advancing a new intellectual strategy.

Conclusion

The year 1930 marked the end of an important chapter in Haykal's intellectual evolution. His recantation of Comtian positivism was irrevocable. True, he would continue to consider the use of the scientific method and the defence of freedom of thought as central principles in his social programme and cultural reform. These, however, would no longer be cultivated within the framework of the positivist scheme which equated science with a perfection capable of furnishing complete knowledge of the universe and universal happiness to all segments of human society. Instead, at this later stage, these principles would be integrated as relative elements in the spiritualist Bergsonian paradigm which would become the solid foundation for further development in Haykal's Eastern, and later Islamic, orientations in the decade of the 1930s.

In that decade the economic depression, social change, political turmoil, and cultural tensions were severely aggravated. A series of historical processes sharpened Haykal's awareness of the need to meet new challenges and try to cope with them in the most effective and

constructive way possible. These included: the dictatorial regime of Isma'il Sidqi, the abolition of the constitution of 1923, the closing down of *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya*, the growing threat to freedom of expression, and the fierce struggle waged by Haykal and his party against the oppressive measures imposed by the Sidqi regime; and, later, the impasse caused by the intraparty political intrigues and parliamentary crises which became increasingly frequent during the decade, the rapid urbanization processes, the exponential population growth in the cities (especially Cairo), the overproduction of graduates from the educational systems who could not find jobs commensurate with their professional skills, and in the wake of these processes the considerable expansion of an educated urban middle-class (the *effendiyya*) which became a central factor in the production and consumption of the literate culture, the shaping of political public opinion, and the radicalization of the political culture; the growing power of the Palace and of al-Azhar and their manipulative mobilization of mass movements to further their political interests; the crisis of the European democracies and the rise of fascism and Nazism, with their reflection in the Egyptian domestic arena, particularly by spurring the emergence of ultranationalist populist organizations; and the resurgence of Islamicist and Arabist sentiments which generated further political radicalization and anti-European cultural reactionism. Haykal would intensify his efforts to shape a discourse common to him and to the new mass groups with the aim of ensuring social order, political stability, and cultural consensus.

The Bergsonian paradigm would continue to constitute for Haykal the paramount conceptual scheme for interpreting his own and his society's historical experience, for diagnosing its ills in the context of the new mass politics, and for attempting to propose a programme for change. It would serve as an important tool for forging the popular discourse with the new urban strata. Now, equipped with the final word of Bergson, set forth in his book *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932),[229] Haykal would invoke Bergsonism as a philosophical foundation for the further development of his Easternist orientation, and from the mid-1930s also for his shift to Islam. In both *Thawrat al-adab* (1933) and, more systematically, in *Fi Manzil al-wahy* (1937), Bergson and Bergsonian spiritualism would occupy a decisive theoretical place in the intellectual formulation of Easternism and in the shift to Islam.[230] When, as mid-decade approached, the

mainstream communities of discourse in his country gave growing legitimation to a new type of Islamic intellectual discourse, Haykal could confidently complete his transition to Islamic subjects and themes. It was then that Islam, Islamic history, and Islamic civilization provided him with the 'spirituality', the 'faith', the 'intuitive inspiration', and the 'true spiritual life' which earlier had been perceived to emanate from the East and Eastern civilizations. Islam endowed him with the 'spiritual force' which enabled him to divorce himself utterly from the positivism and materialism that posit science as the exclusive and omnipotent force for determining the course of modern life. In Islam, moreover, he would find the 'real social force' to shape a shared discourse with the broad groups of the society and a wide base for articulating a modern literate middle-ground culture common to the intellectuals and the masses.[231]

There is little justification for interpreting this entire process, in both its early stage (1927–30) and its later stages (1932–37), in exclusively tactical or manipulationist terms. Such an interpretation posits the 'pressures from below' – Haykal's need to develop channels of communication with the masses – as having been the sole determinant underlying his intention to foment the intellectual change. That approach assumes the submission of the intellectual (even at the tactical level) and of the text to the variable environment, and in this case to the caprices and whims of the masses. It reduces the intellectual's message and its meaning to the social experience which supposedly shapes them.

As we tried to show, it is no less important to recover Haykal's intention in the context of his immediate communities of intellectual discourse. His texts constitute an integral part of the fabric of their texts. The meanings he confers on his own and his society's experience derive also from the system of meanings which they confer on that historical experience. The intellectual shifts which occurred in the positions of central communities of discourse on fundamental questions relating to Egyptian society – such as the means to promote modernization, communal identity, national culture, the ways to represent the heritage of the past, the proper civilizational orientation, and the attitude of the intellectual elite towards the masses (their general transition from elitist, Western, positivist, Egyptian-pharaonic orientations in the 1920s, to Eastern–Islamic–Arab more populist orientations, representing also a reaction to the 'imperialistic' European

culture in the 1930s) – had an impact 'from above' on Haykal's process of intellectual change. They played a definite role in determining his course of development. This 'from the top down' dynamics was generated also if we bear in mind that Haykal always saw himself as an intellectual leader swimming with – not against – the mainstream.

Beyond this, as Hourani rightly pointed out, the meaning that the individual intellectual confers on social or political change is at least partly autonomous. It is not simply reducible to social or political experience. With all the importance of explaining the individual's intellectual evolution, in its sociopolitical contexts, the distinctive meaning conferred on the latter is not a function or a reflection of political power, social class, or economic wealth. And 'to decipher this meaning is an essential part of our work as historians.'[232] Whatever their social origins, ideas produced by intellectuals play an autonomous role in creating the meanings and defining the terms through which groups perceive their experience, and organize and modify it. As intellectual historians, we must certainly emphasize the social role of cognition. But this without denying individuals the power to weigh the reasonableness of their beliefs or alter the social order of which they are a part. 'Ideas arise out of specific types of social order. But these social orders cannot function without ideas.'[233]

Notes

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1. For the early intellectual evolution of Haykal, see Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Mudhakkirat fi al-siyasa al-misriyya*, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1977), pp. 19–69; Charles D. Smith, *Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt: A Biography of Muhammad Husayn Haykal* (Albany, 1983), pp. 33–60; Baber Johansen, *Muhammad Husayn Haikal: Europa und der Orient in Weltbild eines Ägyptischen Liberalen* (Beirut, 1967), pp. 1–59; David Semah, *Four Egyptian Literary Critics* (Leiden, 1974), pp. 69–84; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900–1930* (New York, 1986), pp. 33–9; Ed De Moor, 'Egyptian Love in a Cold Climate: Egyptian Students in Paris at the Beginning of the 20th Century', *Orientations*, pp. 153–7.

2. Smith, pp. 61–90; Haykal, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, pp. 75–217; Johansen, pp. 61–124; Semah, pp. 75–95; Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 77–227.

3. Haykal, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 2 (Cairo, 1977), pp. 11–12.

4. Ibid., p. 12.
5. Smith, pp. 62–71, 89, 96; Johansen, pp. 77–124; Semah, pp. 78–95; Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 143–227; Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (ed.), *al-Duktur Muhammad Husayn Haykal* (Cairo, 1958), pp. 21–32, 84–96; Taha 'Umran Wadi, *al-Duktur Muhammad Husayn Haykal – Hayatuhu wa-turathuhu al-adabi* (Cairo, 1969), pp. 44–58, 66–73, 153–77.
6. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Jan Jak Rusu – Hayatuhu wa kutubuhu* (2 vols, Cairo, 1921, 1923). For a discussion of the work, see Wadi, pp. 122–6; Johansen, pp. 52–75; Smith, pp. 56–60.
7. Haykal, *Jan Jak Rusu* (3rd ed., Cairo, 1978), p. 5.
8. Ibid., p. 18.
9. Ibid., p. 12.
10. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Fi awqat al-faragh* (Cairo, 1925).
11. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Tarajim misriyya wa gharbiyya* (Cairo, 1929). Haykal's book *Waladi* (Cairo, 1931) – impressions of his European sojourns – should also be included in these European-oriented writings of the 1920s.
12. Haykal, *Fi awqat*, pp. 246–342; Semah, pp. 78–90; Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 143–90.
13. Haykal, *Fi awqat*, pp. 344–67; Semah, pp. 75–95; Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 191–227.
14. Semah, pp. 69–95; Johansen, pp. 45–9; Smith, pp. 43–60; Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 33–9, 130–42; Haykal, *Tarajim*, pp. 243–67.
15. Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 33–9; Smith, pp. 9–60; Semah, pp. 69–74.
16. Smith, pp. 91–8; Charles D. Smith, 'The "Crisis of Orientation": The Shift of Egyptian Intellectuals to Islamic Subjects in the 1930's', *IJMES* 4 (October, 1973), pp. 391–3; Johansen, pp. 121–37.
17. Smith, *Islam and the Search for Social Order*, pp. 100–30; Johansen, pp. 125–212; Semah, pp. 96–105.
18. Johansen, pp. 129–45.
19. Ibid., pp. 125–57.
20. Semah, pp. 96–100.
21. Smith, pp. 89–108.
22. Ibid., p. 100.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., pp. 100–8.
25. Ibid., p. 103.
26. For a discussion of this process, see I. Gershoni, 'Imagining the East: Muhammad Husayn Haykal's Changing Representations of East–West Relations, 1928–1933', *Asian and African Studies* 25 (November, 1991), pp. 209–37.
27. For a discussion of this process, see ibid., pp. 237–51.
28. For variegated discussions of this process, see Semah, pp. 96–7, 100; Smith, pp. 103, 107, 215; I. Gershoni, *The Emergence of Pan-Arabism in Egypt*

(Tel Aviv, 1981), pp. 38–41; idem, 'Imagining and Reimagining the Past: The Use of History by Egyptian Nationalist Writers, 1919–1952', *History and Memory* 4 (Fall–Winter, 1992), pp. 8–29, Haykal's retreat from his earlier extreme pharaonicism typical of most of the 1920s (see e.g., Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 164–90) can be demonstrated through his writing in the years 1932–35. See, e.g., Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'Hal fi Misr nahda adabiyya?' *al-Hilal*, 1 June 1932, pp. 1096–98; idem, 'al-Fir'awniyya wa'l-'arabiyya – Hadir la madi lahu la mustqbal lahu', *Mulhaq al-Siyasa*, 29 September 1933, pp. 24–8; idem, *Thawrat al-adab* (Cairo, 1933), pp. 5–15, 244–53; idem, 'al-Funun al-rafi'ah wa atharuha fi hayat sharqina al-'arabi', *al-Hilal*, 1 November 1933, pp. 19–21; idem, 'al-Ihya' al-'arabi' *al-Hilal*, 1 April 1934, pp. 641–4; idem, 'al-Ta'awun fi al-ihya' al-'arabi', *al-Hilal*, 1 May 1935, pp. 767–70.

29. Smith, pp. 109–30; Antonie Wessels, *A Modern Arabic Biography of Muhammad: A Critical Study of Muhammad Husayn Haykal's Hayat Muhammad* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 35–48.

30. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'Rijal al-din wa rijal al-'ilm', part 1, *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya* (hereafter *SU*), 12 June 1926, pp. 3–4; part 2, *SU*, 3 July 1926, pp. 3–4; part 3, *SU*, 24 July 1926, pp. 3–4. The essay was republished in Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *al-Iman wa'l-ma'rifa wa'l-falsafa*, edited by Ahmad Haykal (Cairo, 1964), pp. 11–40. The following references are to the latter. Quotation from p. 11.

31. Ibid., pp. 11, 18.

32. Ibid., pp. 11, 14, 18.

33. Ibid., pp. 14, 30.

34. Ibid., p. 34.

35. Ibid., pp. 34–40.

36. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'Augst Comt wa falsafatuhu', part 1, *SU*, 3 September 1927, pp. 10–11; part 2, *SU*, 10 September 1927, pp. 10–11; republished in *al-Iman wa'l-ma'rifa*, pp. 41–58. Haykal probably used a later edition (1927) of L. Levy-Bruhl, *La philosophie d'Auguste Comte*, originally published in Paris, 1900. See also L. Levy-Bruhl, *The Philosophy of August Comte*, an English authorized translation with introduction by F. Harrison (London, 1903).

37. *SU*, 3 September 1927, p. 10.

38. See, e.g., Muhammad Husayn Haykal's address in *SU*, 26 March 1927, p. 20; Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'al-Nahda al-haditha fi al-Sharq – al-Jihad fi sabil hurriyyat al-fikr', *SU*, 9 April 1927, p. 10; Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'Hawl kitab "Fi al-adab al-jahili"', *SU*, 25 June 1927, pp. 10–11.

39. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'Fi sabil hayat jadida – al-Ma'rifa asas iman al-mustaqbal', *SU*, 30 July 1927, pp. 10–11; republished in *al-Iman wa'l-ma'rifa*, pp. 84–92.

40. Haykal, 'Fi sabil hayat jadida', p. 10.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., p. 11.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'al-Nur al-jadid – Ayan Yakun Matla'ahu?' *al-Hilal*, 1 February 1928, pp. 399–403.
52. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'al-Sharq fi tawr ba'thihi', first published in *al-Hadith* (Allepo), January 1928, pp. 41–9; republished in *SU*, 25 February 1928, p. 10; republished later in Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *al-Sharq al-jadid*, edited by Ahmad Haykal (Cairo, 1962), pp. 95–114.
53. See below, 'Causes of the Intellectual Change'.
54. Haykal, 'al-Nahda al-haditha fi al-Sharq – al-Jihad fi sabil hurriyyat al-fikr', *SU*, 9 April 1927, p. 10.
55. Haykal, 'al-Nur al-jadid', pp. 399–403.
56. For Haykal's embracement of Easternism in the late 1920s/early 1930s, see I. Gershoni, 'Imagining the East', pp. 217–51; see also below, 'Causes of the Intellectual Change'.
57. Haykal, 'al-Nur al-jadid', p. 399.
58. Ibid.
59. Haykal, *Jan Jak Rusu*, vol. 2, p. 224; see also Smith, 'The Crisis of Orientation', p. 403, note 5.
60. Ibid.
61. For Henry Bergson's prominence in European intellectualism, see Leszek Kolakowski, *Bergson* (Oxford, 1985). In Kolakowski's apt characterization, Bergson 'was not just a famous thinker and writer; in the eyes of Europe's educated public he was cleary *the* philosopher, the intellectual spokesman *par excellence* of the era ... his influence was widely felt all over Europe in the twenties and thirties ... ' (ibid., p. 1).
62. See R. Rolland, *Essai sur la mystique et l'action de l'Inde vivante: La vie de Ramakrishna* (Paris, 1929); idem, *La vie de Vivekananda et l'evangile universal* (Paris, 1930). On Rolland's more direct impact on the contemporary Egyptian Easternist mood in the late 1920s see, for example, the editorial, 'Nihayat al-hadara al-gharbiyya wa'l-haja ila hadara jadida', *al-Hilal*, 1 November 1929, pp. 59–60.
63. A. Malraux, *La tentation de l'Occident* (Paris, 1926).
64. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 2 vols (New York, 1926). The book was originally published in Germany in the years 1918–1922 under the title *Der Untergang des Abdendlandes*. Spengler's theories and concepts were systematically discussed in 'Hal al-madaniyya maqdiy 'alayhi?' *SU*, 9 February 1929, p. 7.
65. Smith, pp. 100–3, 212–5; Haykal, *Waladi*, pp. 203–4.
66. Haykal, 'al-Nur al-jadid', p. 399.

67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., p. 400.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., p. 401.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., pp. 400–1.
80. Ibid., p. 401.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid., pp. 401–3.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., p. 402.
93. For earlier expressions of 'Easternism', see A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Oxford, 1970) pp.103–29; S. Haim, *Arab Nationalism – An Anthology* (Berkeley, 1962), pp.6–16; C. Wendell, *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image – From Its Origins to Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid* (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 140–58, 245–58; T. Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought* (Beirut, 1979), pp. 83–120; D. Reid, *The Odyssey of Farah Antun* (Chicago, 1975), pp. 98–101.
94. Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 264–9.
95. I. Gershoni, 'Imagining the East', pp. 225–48.
96. Haykal, 'al-Nur al-jadid', pp. 400, 402–3.
97. Ibid., p. 402.
98. Ibid., pp. 400-3.
99. Ibid., p. 400.
100. Ibid., p. 403.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., pp. 399–403.
104. Ibid., p. 403.
105. Ibid.

106. Ibid., pp. 402–3.
107. Haykal, 'al-Sharq fi tawr ba'thihi', *SU*, 25 February 1928, p. 10; republished in *al-Sharq al-jadid*, pp. 95–114. The following references are to the latter.
108. Ibid., pp. 95–8.
109. Ibid., pp. 97–8.
110. For this see Haykal's later article, 'La sila al-battata bayna al-tajdid wa'l-ilhad', *SU*, 2 March 1929, pp. 3–4.
111. Ibid.; see also Smith, pp. 82–7, 100–5.
112. *al-Sharq al-jadid*, pp. 97–8.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid., pp. 96–100.
115. Ibid., p. 100.
116. Ibid., pp. 100–1.
117. Ibid., pp. 100–2.
118. Haykal, 'al-Nur alJadid', p. 403.
119. Ibid., pp. 400, 402–3; *al-Sharq al-jadid*, pp.106–14.
120. Ibid., pp. 100–13, quotation from pp. 104, 110.
121. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'Hadarat al-Sharq – Mata tub'athu min jadid li-tudi' Zalam al-madaniyya al-gharbiyya?' *Majallat al-Rabita al-Sharqiyya*, 15 December 1928, pp. 54–5; *SU*, 29 December 1928, pp. 3–4; republished in *al-Sharq al-jadid*, pp. 114–22.
122. Haykal, 'Hadarat al-Sharq', *SU*, p. 3.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Ibid.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid.
139. Ibid., p. 4.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid. p. 3.
142. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
143. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'al-Iman wa'l-'ilm', *SU*, 27 April 1929, pp. 3–4; republished in *al-Iman wa'l-ma'rifa*, pp. 92-101.

144. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l nuh – Wujub ta'awunhuma li-iqmat al-hadara', *SU*, 18 May 1929, pp. 3–4; republished in *al-Iman wa'l-ma'rifa*, pp. 101–11.
145. Haykal, 'al-Iman wa'l-'ilm', *SU*, p. 3.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
151. Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', p. 3.
152. Ibid.
153. Ibid.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
157. Ibid., p. 3.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid.
169. Ibid.
170. Ibid., p. 4.
171. Ibid.
172. Ibid.
173. Ibid.
174. Ibid.
175. Ibid.
176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
178. Ibid.
179. As the reader will see, the following discussion owes a special debt to the theories and insights of Quentin Skinner. See, in particular, James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Cambridge, 1988).
180. Smith, p. 102.
181. Ibid., p. 101.
182. Ibid., pp. 60–1, 86–7, 96–108.
183. Ibid., p. 100.

184. Ibid., pp. 100–1.
185. Ibid., pp. 101–3.
186. Ibid., p. 107; emphasis added.
187. Ibid., pp. 98–108; see also Smith, 'The Crisis of Orientation', pp. 398–9.
188. Smith, p. 87.
189. Ibid., pp. 97–108.
190. Ibid., p. 101.
191. Ibid.
192. Ibid., pp. 86–7; emphasis added.
193. See, e.g., P. J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt* (London, 1969) pp. 315–42; M. Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt: The Wafd and its Rivals, 1919–1939* (London, 1979), pp. 221–309; A. L. Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment, 1922–1936* (Berkeley, 1977), pp. 95–170; J. Berque, *Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution* (London, 1972), pp. 385–450; R. L. Tignor, *State, Private Enterprise, and Economic Change in Egypt, 1918–1952* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 90–146; J. Beinin and Z. Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882–1954* (Princeton 1987), pp. 179–209.
194. Haykal, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, pp. 219–99.
195. Ibid., pp. 241–90; Smith, pp. 77–87, 97–108.
196. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context*, pp. 75–6.
197. For this see ibid., p. 76.
198. See, e.g., Haykal, 'al-Nur al-Jadid', pp. 399–403; Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', pp. 3–4.
199. See, e.g., ibid., p. 3; Haykal, 'Harakat al-tajdid fi al-Sharq', *SU*, 3 November 1928, pp. 5–6; Haykal, 'Hadarat al-Sharq – Mata tub'athu min jadid', pp. 3–4; Haykal, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, pp. 244–74; Haykal, *Waladi*, pp. 203–4.
200. See, e.g., Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', pp. 3–4.
201. See, e.g., ibid.; Haykal, 'La Sila bayna al-tajdid wa'l-ilhad', pp. 3–4.
202. Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', p. 4.
203. See, e.g., Haykal, 'al-Nur al-jadid', pp. 399–403; Haykal, 'al-Sharq fi tawr ba'thihi', *SU*, p. 10; Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', pp. 3–4.
204. As intimated by Smith, pp. 50, 80–7, 90–108; see also, pp. 129–30, 145–57; C. Smith, 'The Intellectual and Modernization: Definitions and Reconsiderations – The Egyptian Experience', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (October 1980), pp. 513–33.
205. More evidence of this 'constructive strategy' and his overall intention to promote it can be found in various other texts (most of which are not mentioned above), articles, reviews and editorials, produced by Haykal in the years 1927–1930. See, for example, 'Fi sabil hayat jadida', *SU*, 30 July 1927, pp. 10–11; 'al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya fi sanatiha al-thalitha', *SU*, 17 March 1928, p. 3; "Uzlat al-udaba' wa'l-mufakkirin fi al-Sharq al-'arabi', *SU*, 24 November 1928, pp. 5–6; 'al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya li-sinniha al-rabi'a', *SU*, 23

March 1929, p. 3; 'al-'Uzama' wa'l-fikra al-insaniyya', *SU*, 7 September 1929, pp. 3–4; 'al-Tarjama lil-mu'asirin', *SU*, 15 February 1930, pp. 3–4; 'Adab al-qisas wa'l-riwaya', *SU*, 22 February 1930, pp. 3–4; 'Hijrat al-rif ila al-mudun, *SU*, 1 March 1930, pp. 3–4; 'al-Sihafa wa'l-taqaddum al-qawmi', *SU*, 29 March 1930 pp. 3–4; 'al-Azma al-iqtisadiyya', *SU*, 10 January 1931, pp. 3–4.

206. Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', p. 4. For the same argument, see Haykal, *Thawrat al-adab*, p. 12.

207. Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', pp. 3–4; these arguments recur again in *Thawrat al-adab*, pp. 6–15, 244–53.

208. For these early Arabist trends see, in detail, I. Gershoni, *Egypt between Distinctiveness and Unity: The Search for National Identity, 1919–1948* (Tel Aviv, 1980), pp. 198–204, 232–7 (Hebrew).

209. For these Islamicist orientations see R. P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London, 1969), pp. 4–11; I. Gershoni, 'Religion and Nationalism in the Teachings of the Egyptian Salafite Movements', *Hamizrah hehadash*, 26 (1976), pp. 181–202 (Hebrew). Haykal himself was cognizant of this Islamicist option; see, e.g., *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, pp. 271–2.

210. For these populist nativistic Egyptian nationalisms, see J. P. Jankowski, *Egypt's Young Rebels: 'Young Egypt', 1933–1952* (Stanford, 1975), pp. 1–25. The 'populist' Egyptian nationalism expressed by the Wafd in the second half of the 1920s could also serve as a 'model' for emulation. Again, Haykal seemed well aware of this ideological option; see *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, pp. 99–109, 122–44, 159–81, 194–217, 220–40, 243–75.

211. D. LaCapra, 'Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts', in D. LaCapra and S. L. Kaplan (eds), *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives* (Cornell, 1982), p. 57; see also, pp. 47–85.

212. Johansen, pp. 125–55; Smith, pp. 100–3, 212–5.

213. Ibid., p. 102.

214. Haykal, 'Hadarat al-Sharq – Mata tub'athu min jadid', p. 3.

215. Ibid.

216. Ibid.

217. Ibid., pp. 3–4.

218. Ibid., p. 3. See also Haykal, 'al-'Aql wa'l-ruh', pp. 3–4.

219. H. Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris, 1932), pp. 223–85; see, in particular, pp. 236–42; see also the English translation of the book, H. Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. A. Audra and C. Brereton (Garden City, NY, 1954), pp. 209–65, in particular, pp. 221–7. See also Kolakowski, *Bergson*, pp. 72–87.

220. See, e.g., Rolland, *Essai sur la mystique et l'action de l'Inde*; Malraux, *La tentation de l'Occident*.

221. Kolakowski, *Bergson*, pp. 1–36, 53–105.

222. Smith, 'The Crisis of Orientation', p. 403; Haykal, *Jan Jak Rusu*, vol. 2, p. 224.

223. Gershoni and Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs*, pp. 255–69; I. Gershoni and J. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation 1930–1945*,

(Cambridge, 1995), pp. 35–53.

224. Gershoni, 'Imagining the East', pp. 217–25.

225. Ibid., pp. 217–48. For the concept of the 'community of discourse' see LaCapra, ibid., pp. 67–73; D. A. Hollinger, 'Historians and the Discourse of Intellectuals', in J. Higham and P. K. Conkin (eds), *New Directions in American Intellectual History* (Baltimore, 1979), pp. 42–63.

226. Gershoni, 'Imagining the East', pp. 217–48; Gershoni, *Egypt between Distinctiveness and Unity*, pp. 139–61.

227. Haykal, 'al-Hahda al-haditha fi al-sharq – al-Jihad fi sabil hurriyyat al-fikr', *SU*, 9 April 1927, p. 10.

228. Ibid.

229. Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion.*

230. Haykal, *Thawrat al-adab*, pp. 247–8; Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Fi manzil al-wahy* (Cairo, 1937), pp. 25–8, 629–37.

231. This is particularly reflected in *Fi manzil al-wahy*. See also Smith, pp. 132–5.

232. A. Hourani, 'How Should We Write the History of the Middle East?' *IJMES* 23 (1991), p. 135.

233. J. V. Spickard, 'A Revised Functionalism in the Sociology of Religion: Mary Douglas' Recent Work', *Religion* 21 (April, 1991), p. 157. For a broader view see ibid., pp. 141–64; Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (London, 1987.)

3 ❁ Albert Hourani and Orientalism

Gaby Piterberg

> Actually we had, unwittingly, met in January of that year, when we both sat for a History Scholarship examination. Between us, we took two of the three scholarships (Demyships) offered by Magdalen College, leaving the third for the whole British Empire. This led the disgusted headmaster of one of the less successful candidates to exclaim: 'Hourani, Issawi! What is Magdalen coming to? What did they *feed* you on?' The answer was, of course, *kibbeh*. [Charles Issawi, 'My Life and Pleasant Times with Albert Hourani.']

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed, as it were, having emerged from two old histories. [Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*.]

Introduction

This article considers the work of two individuals – Albert Hourani and Edward Said – about whom I cannot write in a dispassionate, detached way. When I studied at Oxford Albert had already retired, but he continued to visit St Antony's regularly. It is difficult to overstate the extent to which I feel fortunate that he found me worthy of his attention, care and advice, and eventually friendship. I have never met Edward Said, but I have been an avid reader of his scholarly work and 'viewer' of his political activity; as both an historian and a non-Zionist Israeli, Said's intellectual prowess and political courage have evoked my admiration and stimulated my imagination.

In what turned out to be my last meeting with Albert, he seemed to be in a pensive mood. The occasion was the sorely missed 'Let's meet for tea at Brown's' appointments that developed after his

retirement. Reflecting on his teaching career at Oxford, Albert observed that it comprised a major success and a major failure. The former was his work with graduate students. The latter was the fact that he was unable to gain the Oxford establishment's support for his initiative to establish an undergraduate degree in Middle East *history*, side by side with the Orientalist one.

What Albert defined as a success and a failure may serve to define the main argument of my article: that his career, because of the great influence of his writing and teaching, marked the transformation of the study of the Middle East from Orientalism to history (and other social sciences – my own concern in this article is with history), at least for the Ottoman and modern periods. It is true that Albert admired several Orientalists (he would probably not have liked the capital O) and considered some of them his mentors; and that he occasionally noted that he lacked training and experience in the philological approach and deemed this disadvantageous. It is also true that he was reluctant to unearth explicit critiques of Orientalism, chiefly because it was not in his nature to do so, on this or any other matter. It is finally true that Albert continued to use occasionally the basic concept of two civilizations – Islamic and Western – interacting with each other, not least culturally, probably a residue of the influence upon him of the Hegelian circle at Oxford, as well as of Gibb and Toynbee.[1]

And yet, with the late 1960s and early 1970s as a turning point, Albert grew dissatisfied with Orientalism and endeavoured to take the field in another direction. The most marked features in this gradual shift seem to have been his realization that the undertaking to continue Gibb and Bowen's work was, as far as he was concerned, a *cul de sac*; the time he spent at the University of Chicago; and his growing interest in urban history and in the notables. I shall argue that this shift was best manifested, indeed embodied, in his attitude to Ottoman history in general and that of the Ottoman Middle East in particular.

I shall first discuss Albert's explicit views on Said's *Orientalism* and the debate to which it has given rise, and then examine a portion of Albert's own work to sustain my argument with respect to Ottoman history.

Comments on Orientalism

Though obvious, the following remark seems appropriate because Said,

as he himself notes,[2] has been subjected to a certain kind castigation that is simply unreasonable: that since his academic expertise does not include the study of the Middle East and Islam he is not in a position to criticize it. This is unreasonable on two counts. Firstly, Said's work is censured for what it is *not*, nor was meant to be: an actual alternative to the Orientalist way of studying and representing the Middle East and Islam. Secondly, the notion that, since he is not familiar with the *hadith* literature or the Ottoman records, he cannot criticize Orientalism is about as valid as saying that since he never was a colonial administrator he cannot criticize colonialism.

An important difference between Hourani's and Said's approaches to the issue of Orientalism is that between reconstruction and deconstruction respectively. Hourani's purpose was to establish an alternative way to study the Middle East, and the reverence he showed towards some Orientalists should not mask his constant search for such an alternative. Said is not interested, at least not directly, in rewriting the history of the Middle East but in telling the story of the European Enlightenment in another way. One of the chief results of this difference is that, whereas for Said Orientalism is a comprehensive discursive category with manifest varieties but latent structure, Hourani was concerned with particular – and *scholarly* – Orientalist theses which, if deemed flawed, he sought to replace (Weber's model of the city and the 1798 narrative are outstanding examples).

Since Hourani's explicit remarks on Orientalism are too numerous and scattered to be surveyed here in an orderly way, I concentrate, somewhat arbitrarily, on articles that mark two chronological ends in the evolution of his views: his 1979 review of *Orientalism* for the *New York Review of Books* and some comments he made two decades later.[3]

Rereading Hourani's review of *Orientalism* in 1995, with the benefit of hindsight and the voluminous 'Saidiana', one is struck by the depth, perceptiveness and open-mindedness of this early publication. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with his early view of *Orientalism*, one must appreciate how quickly he understood what the book was about, and its approach and value. This is especially noteworthy given that a substantial number of the reviews that have followed Hourani's, whether critical or favourable, have failed precisely at this basic level.

What Hourani felt towards *Orientalism*, a basic feeling that remained unchanged, was encapsulated in two adjectives in the first

sentence of his review in which he characterized it as 'this powerful and disturbing book'.[4] Though on the whole his was a favourable review, there are two features in the book with which he was dissatisfied: the tone and style, and the treatment of Orientalist scholars (at least some of them) as distinguished from colonial officers, novelists and travellers. The question of tone and style is interesting. That Hourani was uncomfortable with Said's powerful style should not surprise anyone familiar with his own speech and writing (which is not to say that one style is better than the other). More interestingly, however, Hourani sensed that Said's style was inextricably intertwined with his actual thesis that, to use Hayden White's (and others') general observation, especially with a writer as self-conscious as Said, form and content were inseparable. 'His writing,' Hourani remarked, 'is forceful and brilliant (sometimes too forceful for comfort, sometimes too brilliant to be clear').[5] Later, doubting the validity of Said's arguments when applied to scholars, he noted that '[t]hese doubts are of two kinds. First, Mr Said adopts a certain style or tone which may make the reader uneasy; his awareness of the style of other writers makes us the more conscious of his own.'[6]

Hourani raised doubts about the extent to which the concept of Orientalism, as constructed by Said, was a valid analysis of Orientalist scholarship (here his mention of Massignon and Gibb was of course not accidental). He made two general observations. One was that Said's critical explanation was convincing for 'politicians and colonial servants' but much less so for scholars. The other was that the concepts of Orientalism and of 'the Orientalist' as an ideal-type were too abstract and sweeping, not used 'with care and caution in order to explain particular events and human beings.' A telling example for Hourani was Said's reading of Massignon. This section was, in his view, one of the best in the whole book but, at the same time, it illustrated how little the stereotypical 'Orientalist' explained a given, outstanding Orientalist.[7]

More specifically Hourani, first, pointed out the lack of attention to German Orientalism – a corner-stone in the evolution of Orientalist scholarship. Second, he thought that the 'telling quotations' of notable Orientalists (Nöldeke and Gibb) Said had found were insufficient, for 'we must go beyond their *obiter dicta* to their serious professional work, and ask whether it was shaped and distorted by the crude opposition between "Orient" and "Occident", rather than by concepts

more suited to its subject matter, and how far its products served to confirm and strengthen that opposition.'[8]

Nearly two decades after the publication of his review, Hourani's view of *Orientalism* was not essentially altered. Nevertheless, it contained different accents. His main dissatisfaction remained the total undermining of *scholarly* Orientalism which, by the late 1980s, had quite evidently been caused as much by the independent history of the book and its impact as by what Said had originally meant to convey in it. In addition, he now lamented what he could not possibly have known in 1979: 'I rather regret that Edward Said gave the book that title. Orientalism has now become a dirty word.'[9] Another point he reiterated is the fact that Said ignored German scholarship, only now Hourani points to the towering figure of Goldziher in whom he had become very interested during the 1980s.[10]

At the same time, however, subtly indicating the 'failure' I mentioned above, Hourani reaffirms his early observation that the underlying argument is valid: 'still, in *Orientalism* Edward is justified in challenging the idea that only those who come up through the philological disciplines are entitled to write an article on any aspect of Asia.'[11] Albert notes in this respect that in British universities, Oxbridge most notably, the notion that non-Western regions, the Middle East in particular, have got not only languages and religions but also histories 'is not fully accepted'. He further recalls:

> When the Middle East Centre at Oxford was announced, a letter of protest came in from one of the people who taught Arabic at Cambridge saying, 'These people have no right, what do they know? They haven't studied the languages, they haven't studied the religious systems ... ' And that sentiment is still quite strong.[12]

In the 'Afterword' to *Orientalism*'s new edition (1995) Said refers to Hourani's views, both early and late. He intimates that Hourani wrote to him in March 1992 and while recognizing 'the force of my argument (for which he said he could not reproach me)', he regretted that the impact of the book was such that Orientalism could no longer be used neutrally, just to designate (and this is Said citing Hourani's communication) 'a limited, rather dull but valid discipline of scholarship'.[13]

In his remarks on the *NYRB* article (1979), which he deems 'generally balanced', Said agrees with Hourani that the scholarly achievements of several Orientalists are noteworthy and that not all

Orientalists are the same (I think that the section on Massignon in *Orientalism* vindicates Said's statement). He insists, however,

> ... on the prevalence in the discourse itself of a structure of attitudes that cannot simply be waved away or discounted. Nowhere do I argue that Orientalism is evil, or sloppy or uniformly the same in the work of each and every Orientalist. But I do say that the *guild* of Orientalists has a specific history of complicity with imperial power, which it would be Panglossian to call irrelevant. So while I sympathize with Hourani's plea, I have serious doubts whether the notion of Orientalism properly understood can ever, in fact, be detached from its rather more complicated and not always flattering circumstances.[14]

I understand Hourani's stipulation, in the *NYRB* article for instance, that Orientalist scholars be judged not only by unfortunate *obiter dicta* but chiefly by their actual research (though the analysis of the 'Ottoman mind' by Gibb and Bowen, for example, would only serve to substantiate what Said says, allegedly on the basis of *obiter dicta*). What I find puzzling in Hourani's views on *Orientalism*, however, is his criticism, sometimes presented as regret, that Said subjects colonial officers and politicians, travellers, artists *and* scholars to the same critical framework of the Orientalist discourse. It is puzzling because it is patently clear that Hourani understood from the outset, unlike other critics, what *Orientalism* was about, that is, that it was about the Foucauldian concept of Power/Knowledge. In other words, he must have realized that wishing that Said's work had not undermined Orientalism as a neutral, purely scientific discipline is tantamount to wishing that he had written another book, not *Orientalism* somewhat modified.

Could it be that the disturbing thought for Hourani was how perilously close he himself had been in the late 1930s and 1940s to fulfilling 'the East is a Career' in the Saidian sense?

The Shift

One of the instances where Said has failed to notice a substantial development in the study of the Middle East and Islamic societies is Ottoman history. In the passage alluded to above, where he refers to Hourani's regret that the term Orientalism no longer had an unloaded, neutral meaning, he concedes that someone whose expertise lies in the Ottoman archives might be considered an Orientalist in the sense

Albert wished to have maintained.[15] This is not the occasion to dwell on the fascinating developments in Ottoman historiography. Suffice it to say that in no other field has a pivotal Orientalist thesis – the rise/decline narrative – been as effectively demolished and alternatives presented as in Ottoman history.

Hourani's recognition of the potential contained in the study of the Ottoman state and society gradually increased. It is not coincidental that at the conclusion of his interview with Nancy Gallagher, when asked 'Could you give advice to students who are considering a specialization in Middle East history?', one of his chief recommendations was that

> At least some of them should learn Ottoman Turkish well and learn also how to use Ottoman documents, since the exploitation of Ottoman archives, located in Istanbul and in smaller cities and towns, is perhaps the most important task of the next generation.[16]

The shift in Hourani's thought and work, of which, as I argue, the 're-discovery' of Ottoman history is an outstanding manifestation, had two features: it occurred in a dialectical way, and its expression was delayed until the latter part of the 1960s. The dialectical key to the shift lies in Hourani's struggle with the continuation of Gibb and Bowen's *Islamic Society and the West* (two parts, 1950 and 1957). It was dialectical because, on the one hand, out of its critique came the conclusion that 'I did not find their framework of ideas suitable for what I wished to write.'[17] On the other hand, however, out of this critique was conceived the alternative, in the shape of *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (1981). It is significant that this book contains what in my view is Hourani's most fascinating and personal stock-taking (apart from interviews, I do not think that in any of his texts the use of the pronoun 'I' is as frequent as in the Introduction to *Emergence*), and that the Ottoman essays, written in the second half of the 1960s, constitute the basis of the book.

Although *Emergence* is a collection of essays, Hourani's selection of them, the way he binds them together in his masterful 'Introduction' and the personal tone, make possible a twofold observation: that *Emergence* ended his frustration with the futile attempts to continue *Islamic Society and the West* along its Toynbean lines; that *Emergence*, far from being mere continuation, is in fact a dialectical alternative to Gibb and Bowen's work.

As for the second feature, the fact that the expression of the shift

was delayed until the mid-1960s, I can only venture a speculation. From Hourani's comments, at least those known to me, it is difficult to ascertain at what point he began to feel ill at ease with this undertaking. He does reveal that he became 'doubtful of the concept of "civilisation" as an intelligible field of study', and that he deemed the paradigm of the projected series – 'the impact of the West' – problematic and (this is my conclusion) Eurocentric.[18] In retrospect, he further confesses that the project tormented his mind: 'The second [reason for not publishing much after 1963] was that I was still committed to this book on the Islamic society and the West. I just didn't know how to write it. I tried again and again to write it by drafts, several drafts, but it never got right.' (Though I do not wish to be a self-appointed interpreter of Hourani's inner thoughts, I do find it significant that he says '*it* never got right' rather than '*I* never got it right', as if to hint that something was inherently wrong in the underlying idea, not in his own unsuccessful attempts to articulate it.)[19] It is also noteworthy that Hourani had already in 1955 expressed his doubts of Toynbee's theory of history, with special attention to the civilization as an analytical unit and the rise/fall narrative.[20]

Regardless of the precise point at which Albert began to disapprove of Gibb and Bowen's basic approach, I argue not only that *Emergence* was the comprehensive expression of this dialectical disapproval, but also that it was a delayed expression in which contingent factors played a significant role. The clearest indication for the delay is that before articles such as 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables', 'The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East' and 'The Islamic City' (to be discussed below), which constitute the backbone of *Emergence*, there was a major publication: *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*.

The history of *Arabic Thought* is relatively well documented thanks to Hourani's own comments and a thoughtful article by Donald Reid, not to mention the impact of the book itself.[21] It is a book within the tradition of *Ideen Geschichte* and was researched and written at a time when Hourani sought to extricate himself from political history and from a position which for him was too close for comfort to current politics. He resorted to what might be termed his intellectual roots, to what had interested him as an undergraduate reading Politics, Philosophy and Economics and to what he had absorbed from the Oxford Hegelians.

Both Donald Reid and Roger Owen hold that Albert's retrospective judgement of *Arabic Thought* was too harsh.[22] The central place of *Arabic Thought* in the evolution of modern Middle Eastern historiography notwithstanding, I would like to highlight three points about the book that are relevant to the argument I wish to sustain. The first is that, significantly, Albert's modest remark about the indebtedness of *Arabic Thought* to Gibb's work is pointed at *Modern Trends in Islam* (1947) and two other works.[23] The significance of this is that, albeit in a subtle manner, Albert's thought was basically still occupied by civilizational impact. Second, and more suggestive of the same point, is the bottom end of his periodization, that is, the year 1798 as the marker of a turning point from 'tradition' to 'modernity'.

The third and most important indication that *Arabic Thought* is not the shift I have in mind is the book's opening chapters, 'The Islamic State' and 'The Ottoman Empire'. Reid, in his section on the content and framework of *Arabic Thought*, simply notes that the book 'opens with introductory chapters on "the Islamic State" and the Ottoman Empire before 1798. These chapters draw on standard works by H. A. R. Gibb, H. Bowen, B. Lewis, L. Gardet, M. Mahdi, E. I. J. Rosenthal, and R. Walzer.'[24] Though merely introductory, I think that they are not insignificant, especially the first.

In the second chapter Albert simply summarizes the accepted Orientalist view of the Ottoman Empire underpinned as it is by the rise/decline narrative, and bases it on *Islamic Society and the West*, precisely the work he realized he could not continue, and Bernard Lewis's *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.[25] Even more indicative of an Orientalist view of Ottoman history is the chapter on the Islamic State. The content of this chapter is a familiar one: the ideological construct of *the* Islamic State with the historicist and essentialist characteristics of this approach, on the basis of sacred and *nasihat* texts. The background of the Ottoman state is always evolutionary and diachronical, never synchronical; the possibility that the more appropriate background might be a comparison with the Empire's contemporary dynastic states in Europe, rather than Qur'an verses or citations from al-Mawardi, is never considered. Significant, of course, is not only the content of this chapter but also the fact that Albert found it necessary thus to introduce the Ottoman state in particular and his *Arabic Thought* in general.

It may be charged that these are merely introductory chapters based

on the then standard, available works. Granted, but this is precisely the point: it shows that Albert's frame of reference was still basically Orientalist in *Arabic Thought* and that this book was not yet a manifestation of his changed view of the importance of Ottoman history and the Ottoman period in the history of the Arab Middle East, a manifestation of the shift from Orientalism to history.

What brings the shift – and its timing – to the fore most clearly, as well as the fact that the introductory chapters in *Arabic Thought* have remained meaningful, is the comparison between the Ottoman articles in *Emergence* and the above chapters. Both 'The Ottoman Background' (delivered in 1969, first published in 1970) and especially 'The Politics of Notables' (delivered in 1966, first published in 1968) are well-known essays with considerable impact. I would like to stress a few points that are pertinent to the present discussion. First, gone is the rise/decline narrative:

> But it would be too simple and therefore misleading to go beyond that and make a further distinction simply in terms of strength or weakness of Ottoman rule; the traditional division of a period of Ottoman greatness followed by one of Ottoman decline does not help us much to find out what really happened.[26]

Further, Albert suggests here an alternative periodization that is determined by a *historical* criterion (the nature of the pertinent sources), which in itself is not unproblematic, rather than by an essentialist, metaphorical one (an organism's life-cycle). Also, the crucial period of Ottoman weakening is moved from the mid-sixteenth century (Lybyer, Gibb and Bowen, and Bernard Lewis) to the period 1760–1860 (the open challenge to Ottoman sovereignty by the 'notable' Bulut Kapan Ali Bey in Egypt in the 1760s looms on the horizon).[27]

Second, the inclusion but more so omission of references in these two articles are very telling, again, especially when compared to the introductory chapters in *Arabic Thought*. Conspicuous in their absence are, of course, references to Gibb and Bowen's *Islamic Society and the West* and to Bernard Lewis's *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (other works by Lewis, of narrower nature, *are* quoted), works on which the chapters in *Arabic Thought* were based. I say 'of course' because the two works discarded by Albert are pivotal articulations of the ahistorical paradigm of rise and decline. The works that are quoted are monographs and articles on concrete topics. The reason why a work of the same scope as Gibb and Bowen's or Lewis's, but with an

alternative overview, is not is alluded to is both significant and simple: such work was unavailable and – here I venture an impression – Albert may have hoped that his own essays would constitute that alternative.

One of the articles Albert mentions warrants special note in the context of the present discussion: 'Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Realities', by Norman Itzkowitz (*Studia Islamica* 16 [1962], pp. 73–94).[28] This article, without pursuing any fundamental critique of Orientalism but with an awareness of its ethnocentrism, is one of the first and most important refutations of a central Orientalist thesis with regard to the Ottoman Empire, a thesis presented by Lybyer and reproduced by Gibb and Bowen, which argued that in its ideal manifestation there existed in the Ottoman establishment a dichotomous barrier between a secular ruling institution (that consisted exclusively of the Christian-born) and a religious institution (that comprised only free-born Muslims). The breaching of the barrier in the sixteenth century, this thesis said, was one of the chief causes for the 'decline'.

The third point is an interesting insight offered by Ehud Toledano on the relationship between 'The Politics of Notables' and 'The Ottoman Background'.[29] What follows is my own understanding and formulation of Toledano's observation. In a way, the latter article contained a corrective to the former, perhaps was even written in order to rectify the former. Though the interval between the two articles was short,[30] Albert may have sensed that 'The Politics of Notables' might open a path he deemed undesirable. Side by side with leading to a serious, historical consideration of the Arabic-speaking (and other) provinces, Albert may have realized that the framework offered in 'The Politics of Notables' might be used to reaffirm all sorts of modern nationalisms, might be taken to mean that the provincial perspective and sources are paramount and that the imperial legacy, and the centre's vantage point and sources are of secondary importance if not indeed negligible.

The impression that Albert may have been aware and wary of such impact can be gained not so much from 'The Politics of Notables' as from its sequel, 'The Ottoman Background'. The opening pages of the latter make tangible the extent to which Albert was wary that his invigorated interest in the Ottoman period of the Middle East might be interpreted as a nationalist disregard for the Ottoman legacy and imprint. He makes it very clear that what he has in mind is a constant,

simultaneous consideration of both perspectives – the central/imperial and the provincial – as well as the use of both kinds of pertinent sources.[31]

A word on 'The Islamic City' which, not by coincidence I think, appears together with the Ottoman articles in *Emergence* even though its topic is not exclusively Ottoman (it was first published in 1970). The way it was conceived and the impact it has had are also well known, but as an important manifestation of the shift in Albert's understanding of Middle Eastern history this essay highlights the subtle and dialectical nature of his thought. Fred Halliday, for instance, in an eloquent exposition of the Orientalism debate, reassures himself of his chosen safe haven, the Enlightenment and the *universality* of the positivist, modern social sciences, as safeguards against essentialism and guarantees for the proper scholarly study of the Middle East.[32] Constructing his article on a dialectical reading of Max Weber's model of the city, Albert showed in 1970 the subtlety that in 1993 Halliday seems to have lacked, in this respect: true, concepts and models offered by the modern social sciences are potentially and theoretically universal; but in terms of the history of their conception and to a considerable degree also application, these concepts and models have been Eurocentric (one need not go farther than modernization theory, a major product of the modern social sciences).

It seems most inappropriate to end an essay on the work and thought of a great historian such as Albert Hourani without a note on contingency. The shift I have thus far charted has largely drawn on the texts Albert produced. But there were highly significant features and developments in his career – some happened to fall during the said shift, others not – that were of contingent nature. The first of these is of course the fact that he took a degree in PPE rather than Oriental Studies. Among the others the most pertinent seem to be the Near Eastern Reading Group he conducted with Samuel Stern and the direction it took; the governmental decision to develop Area Studies centres that, following the American model, would stress the social sciences rather than philology, and the fact that Oxford/St Antony's was one of the selected sites; and his lengthy and fruitful stay at the University of Chicago in the early 1960s.[33] Of course, without Albert's open-mindedness and insatiable curiosity all these contingencies might have been to no avail.

Last but by no means least, and so characteristic of Albert, was a

major factor: his attentiveness to the interests and desires of his students. It is doubtful that many other scholars of his stature and authority could make the following statement, let alone mean it:

> There were reasons for this [his newly found interest in social history]. One was something about the climate of thought which was changing at the time and the demands of students. By the mid-1960s students who were going to Oxford wanted to do other kinds of subjects, to read other kinds of books. I began to think there are other sorts of history.[34]

Notes

1. See Hourani's Introduction to *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Basingstoke, 1981), pp. xii–xvi, and Roger Owen's essay in this volume.
2. See the 'Afterword' to the most recent edition of *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth, 1995).
3. Albert Hourani, 'The Road to Morocco', *New York Review of Books*, 8 March 1979, pp. 27–30; Nancy E. Gallagher, *Approaches to the History of the Middle East. Interviews with Leading Middle East Historians* (Reading, 1994), pp. 19–47 (the interview with Albert was conducted in 1988). Another late reference to the issue of Orientalism can be found in 'Wednesday Afternoons Remembered', *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 61–74 (this essay appeared for the first time in 1988).
4. *NYRB*, p. 27.
5. Ibid., p. 29.
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. Ibid., pp. 29–30.
8. Ibid.
9. Gallagher, p. 40.
10. Ibid., pp. 40–1.
11. Ibid., p. 41.
12. Ibid., p. 42.
13. See the 'Afterword' to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, pp. 341–2.
14. Ibid., p. 342.
15. Ibid.
16. Gallagher, p. 43.
17. 'Introduction' to *Emergence*, p. xvi.
18. Ibid., p. xvi.
19. Gallagher, p. 37.
20. See 'Toynbee's Vision of History', in *Europe and the Middle East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1980), pp. 135–61 (the essay was originally

published in 1955).

21. Albert's comments can be found in the 'Introduction' to *Emergence* and the Gallagher interview. See also Donald M. Reid, 'Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age Twenty Years After', *IJMES* 14 (1982), pp. 541–57.

22. For Owen's view, see his contribution to this volume.

23. Introduction to *Emergence*, p. xiv and n 6, p. xiii.

24. Reid, p. 548.

25. *Arabic Thought*, p. 25n.

26. 'Notables,' *Emergence*, p. 36.

27. Ibid., pp. 36–9.

28. Ibid., p. 43n.

29. Presented in a response to a presentation by Roger Owen on Albert's work and the development of Middle Eastern scholarship, in the Gabriel Baer Memorial Forum, Tel Aviv University, 9 June 1995. I am grateful to Professor Toledano for permitting me to make use of his observation.

30. As stated above, 'Notables' was orally delivered in 1966 and first published in 1968, and 'The Ottoman Background' in 1969 and 1970 respectively.

31. See 'The Ottoman Background,' *Emergence*, especially pp. 1–6.

32. Fred Halliday, 'Orientalism and its Critics', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1993), pp. 145–6.

33. Gallagher, especially pp. 34–9.

34. Ibid., p. 37.

4 ❁ A Rare Testimony: Albert Hourani and the Anglo–American Committee, 1946

Amikam Nachmani

When, in March 1946, the Anglo–American Committee of Inquiry (AAC) visited Palestine to study the situation there, it fell to the representatives of the Arab Office, Albert Hourani and Ahmad Shuqayri, to wind up the Arab presentation before its members:

> There is a certain inclination in Great Britain and America to state the problem in terms of the conflict of two races and two nationalisms, and to picture the British and American governments as impartial peacemakers and judges in no way evolved in the conflict, but holding the two antagonists apart and doing justice between them. This is not the correct view. You will never understand the problem aright unless you realise that Great Britain and America are essentially involved in it. They are not only judges, they are also actors in the tragedy. I feel there is no solution of the Palestinian problem, not even refusal to solve it, which doesn't involve the risk of using force. In Palestine it is not enough to do nothing in order to preserve the status quo.[1]

> We are part and parcel of the Arab nation. Our country, by geography and history, is part and parcel of the Arab world. Our future destiny, by necessity, is part and parcel of the future of the whole Arab world.[2]

The first quote, Hourani's, struck home at the sentiment predominant among members of the AAC: that the situation in Palestine was complex, confused and utterly confounding; that any step undertaken – including a refusal to adopt one policy or another – would have far-reaching political and military consequences; that it was preferable to function as peace-makers than as parties involved

in the conflict. The sense that they were confronted with an impossible situation haunted the AAC inquiry from the outset, ultimately finding expression in the committee's report; apprehensive of the grave risks recommendations of sweeping changes might entail, the committee ended up recommending to leave the situation in Palestine unchanged, even though its members were aware that a policy of inaction too contained some danger of an outbreak of violence. In the words of Sir Walter Smart, Oriental Counsellor at the British embassy in Cairo: 'The Arabs would do nothing provided HMG did nothing, while the Jews are threatening to do something unless HMG did something.'[3]

In Ahmed Shuqayri's words we find the unequivocal link between Palestine, the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab peoples and states sharply delineated. Throughout its testimony to the AAC, the Arab side insisted on the close link between Palestine and the Arab world, effectively representing it as monolithic. Albert Hourani, in his address to the AAC and in his subsequent writings, also took great pains to stress that link. The committee, too, associated Palestine with the rest of the Arab world (certainly with Greater, or geographical, Syria, i.e., Bilad al-Sham – Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan and Palestine), but being convinced that the differences between Jerusalem and Damascus were trivial at most, their notion was that Palestinian Arabs would come to no harm if they found their political and national expression in Damascus: 'Why can't you achieve in Damascus that which you pursue in Jerusalem?' the committee asked the Palestinian representatives. The AAC's leanings in this direction are nicely illustrated by an exchange between Richard Crossman, one of the AAC's six British members, and Henry Cattan, representing the Arab Higher Committee (the Palestinian Arabs' highest representative body, reconstituted especially to present the Palestinian case before the committee:

> Crossman: Would you say that Arab nationalism, I mean talking about Palestinian Arabs, was Palestinian in its feeling or more general? Is it a nationalism which is Palestinian or Transjordanian, or Syrian, or do the Arabs feel a single nationalism? The difference of state is relatively unimportant.
>
> Cattan: We are all related; [the difference of state is] quite unimportant.[4]

Of course, if one started from the premise that the Arab side would

have little difficulty in achieving its national goals outside Palestine, it was only a small step to conclude, as the AAC did in its report, that Palestine was to become the exclusive domain of neither the Palestinian Arabs nor the Zionists but ought to remain effectively under British control.

Hourani's testimony to the AAC was a rare instance of his adopting a political pose – he was never to write again on contemporary political matters. Leila Fawaz explains this by pointing to Hourani's reluctance to sacrifice the balance and precision of his writing to the transitory requirements of the politicians.[5] Also, Hourani may have found it necessary to take a distance from events in order to gauge them correctly.

Equally extraordinary was the written testimony Hourani submitted to the AAC prior to his appearance (which he had called *Is Zionism the Solution of the Jewish Problem?*) – he was never to repeat the things he wrote in it, nor ever again to engage in efforts to find an explanation for anti-Semitism.[6] In his testimony, Hourani dwelt upon two possibilities, and dismissed both as inadequate and unconvincing. One of these explanations casts the blame upon the non-Jewish world (Gentile persecutors), upon those who are motivated by blind hatred of anyone different or weaker than themselves; or who, acting out of religious prejudice, regard the Jews as the murderers of Christ who continue to deny that he was the Messiah; or upon some ruling class which, anxious to cling to its positions of power, uses hatred of the Jews to distract its vassals' attention from its own deeds. Centuries in the ghetto had accordingly led many Jews to regard such Gentiles as 'a pack of wolves waiting to fall upon them'. There is, argues Hourani, an element of truth in this perception, adding: 'It would indeed be difficult to propound a theory [in this respect] which had no truth in it at all.'[7]

Nevertheless it cannot offer a full explanation of anti-Semitism. Why, demands Hourani, had oppression of the Jews extended over so long a period? And why did the hatred of the non-Jewish world focus particularly on the Jews, not on other minority groups? And how did the Jews contrive to survive as a self-aware group in spite of that oppression?

From here, Hourani goes on to offer a second possible explanation of anti-Semitism:

> At the other extreme stand those who believe that persecution and hatred are wholly the fault of the Jews, because of some essential and extraordinary wickedness on their part. The type of wickedness ascribed to the Jews varies according to the intellectual fashion of the age; in our present age of socioeconomic obsession they are accused of being the driving force behind world capitalism and world communism. Often they are accused of being involved in a conspiracy for the subversion or domination of the world, and thus persecution of them is given the appearance of self-defence.
>
> Such theories too are not wholly devoid of truth. It may be true, as M. Maritain[8] has pointed out, that the Jews are at the heart of the world's unrest, carrying an element of dissatisfaction and restlessness wherever they go. It may be true also that persecution and the consciousness of being unwanted have brought to the front certain bad characteristics which otherwise might have remained underdeveloped.[9]

As noted, Hourani had his reservations about this explanation too. In his opinion, it did not elucidate why the Jews, of all peoples, cling to 'this peculiar wickedness', nor why they responded in this manner to their repression, while other groups reacted in entirely different ways.

Hourani then offers his own explanation of anti-Semitism, one he considers more profound:

> The origin of the Jewish problem is to be found in theirconsciousness of having a special mission in the world, which sets them apart from other human beings and lays special burdens on them; the mission of bearing witness to God before all nations and of obeying the Law in every action of their lives. Their claim to have such a mission is rejected by the Muslim and Christian worlds ... This is the fundamental cause of the abnormality of the Jews, and of their failure to enter into full communion with any of the peoples among whom they dwell and establish a normal moral relationship with them, that is to say a relationship of trust, respect and the recognition of equality. In certain political and economic circumstances, this abnormality has led to more or less violent persecution of the Jews; but persecution has never destroyed the Jewish people or induced them to abandon their traditions, because of the strength and prevalence of their sense of mission. The abnormal position and history of the Jews has bred in them certain characteristics – suspicion, clannishness, a sense of insecurity and

inferiority – which themselves in turn have become contributory causes of persecution.[10]

I

The AAC was established in October 1945 at the instigation of Britain's foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin. A whole range of factors and causes induced the British cabinet to form yet one more committee of inquiry for Palestine – the seventeenth since the introduction of the British mandate in 1920. (The AAC was not to be the last – in 1947 there followed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine [UNSCOP], which was to recommended partition.) The end of the Second World War had brought a dramatic upsurge – marked on the Jewish side by violence and terrorism – in the demands the various parties directed to Britain for fulfilment of their aspirations in Palestine. The Arab side to the conflict, i.e., the Arabs of Palestine and the Arab states, demanded that the country be granted independence and recognition as an Arab land with an Arab majority. An Arab Palestine was a legitimate and democratic demand, since it could be considered as the heartfelt ambition of the majority of the country's inhabitants; moreover, numerous past pledges, most recently in the White Paper of May 1939, had envisaged the establishment of an Arab state in Palestine. Conversely, the Nazi extermination of the Jews in Europe during the war had redoubled Zionist vigour to demand an immediate proclamation of Palestine as a Jewish state open to free immigration of Jewish refugees and displaced persons (DPs). But above and beyond the voices and pressures emanating from the Middle East, there was increasing American pressure on Britain to permit the migration to Palestine of 100,000 Jewish refugees and DPs from Europe. These Jews had flocked to the American zones of occupation in Europe, whether out of an eager desire to emigrate to Palestine or in the hope of making it to the shores of the United States. American demands for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish DPs were intended to take the pressure off American commanders in Europe and immigration authorities in the US, and mollify American public opinion. These same notions could be found in a report of President Truman's emissary to Europe, Earl G. Harrison, upon which Truman commented: 'As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them, except that we do not exterminate them.'[11]

However, the British attitude rested upon global calculations and apprehensions as to Britain's ability, in the post-Second World War Middle East, to contend successfully with burgeoning nationalism and the threat posed by the Soviet Union. London hoped the AAC would bring about Anglo–American collaboration on Palestine, and to foil the intrusion of other players, whether the United Nations or the Soviet Union.[12] In the British view, cooperation with the United States would also help Britain in facing up to other demands in the Middle East for national independence. Furthermore, whereas the Americans agreed to a committee of inquiry because they were interested in facilitating the swift relocation of 100,000 Jewish DPs from Europe to Palestine, Britain hoped that participation in the inquiry would convince the Americans of the opposite, i.e., that Palestine could not absorb the DPs, and that local opposition to further Zionist immigration was intense. Britain hoped the inquiry would show Washington that there was no other possibility than continuation and implementation of the White Paper policy (i.e., establishment of an Arab state in Palestine).

Tying a solution of the Palestine conflict in with the plight of the Jewish DPs in Europe would prove disastrous from the Palestinians' viewpoint. For them, Jewish immigration into Palestine was the principal and most tangible threat to their very existence and to the fulfilment of their own aspirations – it would generate a Jewish majority which meant the democratic transformation of Palestine into a Jewish state and the relegation of Palestinian Arabs to a minority in their own country. That making a connection between the Jewish DPs in Europe and the conflict in Palestine meant striking a blow at the Palestine Arab cause also explains the reservations the Palestinians harboured concerning the AAC:

> Killing a man and walking in his funeral is a known proverb but harming a man and inquiring from his people about the cause for their sorrow is a case which no vocabulary has yet known, but ... should be added to the English one ... There is nothing more strange on behalf of the English than appointing committees of inquiry as though they do not know the causes and the remedies ... as though they are not ... responsible for our difficulties.[13]

But from Britain's point of view, the appointment of the inquiry committee heralded no immediate change of policy in Palestine. Aside from a monthly quota of 1,500 Jewish immigrants, matters in the

country remained as they had been since the 1939 White Paper policy had been instigated. As will be recalled the Zionists opposed this policy because the White Paper set a ten-year period in the course of which Palestine was to become a state with an Arab majority. The policy was also resisted by the Arabs because the White Paper laid down that, beyond an immigration quota of 75,000 set in 1939 (and filled by 1945) any further Jewish immigration was contingent upon the consent of Palestine's Arab majority. That majority was not consulted when HMG set the monthly quota of 1,500 Jewish immigrants.

But it is in the nature of committees of inquiry to postpone rather than encourage implementation of a solution. So too here: since it was obvious that, whatever step it took, Britain faced opposition – Arab or Zionist – the lesser evil was appointment of an inquiry committee. The AAC was more than the 'nothing' but less than the 'something' of Sir Walter Smart's remark to Azzam Pasha.

II

Here it may be appropriate to give a brief sketch of the AAC, its members, its mode of operation and its perception of the terms of reference it was given. What stands out immediately is that the chairmanship was held by two senior judges, Mr Justice Sir John E. Singleton of Britain and Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson of Texas, which endowed the inquiry with an unmistakably judiciary cast. With its penchant for public hearings and almost exclusive reliance upon the statements of the parties to the public, 'the Bench' – as the committee was occasionally called – did not award due attention to witnesses who, in private, were willing to adopt a different, possibly more conciliatory, line than their actual declarations. The public Jewish demand for a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine was never examined more closely, nor set against less drastic views expressed in private by heads of the Jewish community in Palestine, who, in unofficial conversations with members of the AAC, voiced consent to partition. In stating that the demand for the whole of Palestine was the position of the overwhelming majority of the Zionists, the committee's conclusive report did not reflect the more moderate view of some among the heads of the Jewish Agency who agreed to partition in private conversations, but actually revealed the reluctance of the judges – Hutcheson in particular – to attach any significance to testimonies

conveyed outside the official hearings.[14] A similar outcome attended the AAC's meetings with Jewish DPs in Europe, none of whom dared express a public preference for emigration to any country other than Palestine. 'Off camera', some DPs expressed a wish to emigrate to the United States; Palestine was their second choice. But the AAC got the impression that the aspiration of the Jewish DPs to go to Palestine was absolute.

Members of the AAC gained similar impressions from their conversations with Albert Hourani:

> Tonight I dined in an Arab restaurant [in Jerusalem] with Albert Hourani ... We talked until 2:00 a. m. Hourani seems to be in charge of preparing the case to be presented by the Arab Office ... He and his friends are highly critical in a tolerant sort of way of the present Arab leadership and its methods of propaganda. These young men have understood Britain and grasped that the most effective propaganda is contacts in the right places, combined with quiet documentation which conceals the fact that it is propaganda. But they are actually more intransigent in their policy than the old leaders. Partly I suppose because they are Westernized and so compensate for any Western bias by an excess of nationalism. But even more, because they realise that the present social structure won't last long and that the new political movements will be ultranationalistic. Hourani is quite right to feel that if he is to represent the literate Arabs of Palestine, then he must speak the same language as the Mufti, otherwise he will be rejected as a British agent, particularly since he worked so closely with Chatham House.[15]

Other matters and perceptions to which the AAC clung may explain its conclusions, as well as the difficulties various witnesses encountered in attempting to advocate their positions. The common denominator of all these perceptions was the AAC's refusal to consider a political solution for Palestine, in effect endorsing perpetuation of the status quo, i.e., maintaining the British mandate. From the outset, the American judge affirmed that the various issues under consideration – such as Jewish immigration into Palestine – had no political implications. There was a problem of Jewish refugees and DPs huddled in camps in Europe for whom a home had to be found, and '[w]e know of no country to which the great majority can go in the immediate future other than Palestine'.[16] In other words, the

problem was a purely humanitarian one. And if both sides protested this perception – the Zionists over their failure to convince the AAC that the Jewish DPs were not a humanitarian issue, but principally a political and national problem whose only remedy was a Jewish state in Palestine; the Palestinian Arabs over the AAC's failure to see that a humanitarian solution in Palestine for the Jewish refugees would entail a fundamental political and national transformation, leading to a Jewish majority and the country's evolution into a Jewish state – that was merely viewed as proof of the AAC's neutrality.

Likewise, the AAC became unhappy whenever Christian interests in the Holy Land threatened to be shunted aside by Muslim–Jewish bickering. Confronted with the impossibly complex realities of Palestine, the AAC inclined increasingly to disengage from the Arab–Zionist conflict, and preoccupy itself instead with Islamic, Christian and Jewish interests in the Holy Land. Under the impression that 'they are going to have a casino, a fine big place on Lake Galilee where they gamble all night and do other things accordingly'[17] the AAC meant to restore the sanctity of the Holy Land: 'Like Moses' twelve spies and Jesus' twelve apostles, we twelve too, are a mission to and for the Holy Land.'[18]

This perception of Palestine, with its resort to non-political and non-national terminology ('Muslims' 'Jews', 'Holy Land', rather than 'Arabs', 'Zionists', 'Palestine') led easily to the conclusions drawn in the AAC report, which sought to establish 'once and for all' what should or should not be done in Palestine, and thus finally rejected the exclusive demands of Arabs and Jews:

> Recommendation No. 3: ... Palestine shall be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state ...
> Comment: Throughout the long and bloody struggle of Jew and Arab for dominance in Palestine ... the great interest of the Christian World in Palestine has been completely overlooked, glossed over or brushed aside.
>
> We, therefore, emphatically declare that Palestine is a Holy Land, sacred to Christian, to Jew and Muslim alike; and because it is a Holy Land, Palestine is not, and can never become, a land which any race or religion can justly claim as its very own.
>
> We further, in the same emphatic way, affirm that the fact that it is the Holy Land, sets Palestine completely apart from other lands, and dictates it to the precepts and practices of the Brotherhood of Man, not those of narrow nationalism.[19]

Judge Hutcheson's 'rebuke' to Albert Hourani, whose testimony before the AAC allegedly overlooked the Christian world's interest in Palestine may serve to round off this religious element in the AAC:

> You are going on the assumption that this land, a Holy Land tothe Christian, and more so I would say than it is to the Arab or to the Jew because this was the start of the Christian religion, you are going on the assumption that we have nothing to do with this matter. It is a matter for you and the Arab League. That is your basic assumption.[20]

To comprehend the course of the inquiry and its conclusions, a few words are in order on the man who, more than any other member, made his mark upon the AAC, the Texan Judge Joseph Hutcheson, mayor of Houston (1917) and district judge as of 1918. The judge's Irish–Scots origins and his residence in Texas were recalled throughout the inquiry. The yardstick whereby he explained his positions and drew comparisons with Palestinian realities was the situation in Texas and the ethnic inclinations of the Scots resident in the United States. 'Texas Joe' was the unflattering nickname at first attached to him by the committee's six British members; but when they grasped how forcefully he overshadowed the other members, they swiftly changed the appellation to 'The Judge'. All this came about in spite of his somewhat bizarre conduct. He would emit a loud 'Yippee-ee' when something kindled his enthusiasm; while he referred to President Roosevelt as 'a duplicitous son-of-a-bitch'. The committee's report largely reflected Hutcheson's impressions; anything he did not like was not included, regardless of the protests of his co-chairman, Mr. Justice Singleton. If there was call for explanation why a Jewish state should not emerge in Palestine, it was drawn from the conduct of the Scots in the United States: they did not demand a state in the USA, and it was up to the Zionists to act likewise. The difficulty of applying any solution in Palestine soon induced Hutcheson to regard the whole matter as a humanitarian problem – the need to find a haven for the Jewish DPs in Europe – and nothing more. Hutcheson's twenty-seven years on the bench had led him to attach little importance to fact-finding or research before drawing conclusions. Intuition – or, as he put it, a hunch – was his principal lodestone in reaching a verdict. In a learned legal article published in the *Cornell Law Quarterly* (April 1929) Judge Hutcheson described his exhilaration whenever application of his hunch led him to the truth: '[A]nd when following

it he meets the right solution face to face he can cease his labors and blithely say his troubled-mind: "Trip no further, pretty sweeting, journeys end in lovers meeting, as every wise man's son doth know.'"[21] On the judge's mode of pursuing the inquiry, Richard Crossman commented: 'Hutcheson said that you had to reach your conclusions first, and then choose the facts which supported them; this was judicial procedure. Sir John [Singleton] argued that it was not.'[22]

Given the inevitable clash between the two judges, the Texan judge's gripes as homesickness led him to define himself as refugee or displaced person, his vocal regrets at having accepted membership of the AAC; and given the consequences – in his efforts to speed up the inquiry to the best of his ability so as to put an end to his sufferings and return home to Texas – Hutcheson skirted every political obstacle of the kind with which Palestine is bestrewn to focus upon the problems he defined as humanitarian. In these he included his hatred for politicians, his loathing for ethnic or national expressions which he termed overblown; and, finally, his focus on Christian interests in Palestine, which prompted him to circumvent Zionist and Arab demands – anyone defending political or national interests, as Hourani did, could do no more than 'almost persuade' him:

> I should like to say that after reading your paper and then listening to you I feel a little like what Agrippa said to St Paul – 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Syrian',[23] and it is with considerable trepidation that I venture upon questioning you because I am not at all disparaging but recognising the fact that if your character is up to your brains, you are a pretty good man. I am born in a republic which was annexed by the United States and now the State of Texas, and a great man there said, 'A cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy and when supported by virtue it is the greatest attribute of man.'[24] I am giving you a little tribute. I do not know how much virtue you have, but you have a good mind.

With the sole exception of Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, who appeared for the Zionist side, no one drew similar compliments from the AAC or Judge Hutcheson.[25] The AAC was greatly burdened by its adherence to democratic principle and yardsticks (majority rule). The committee's avoidance of any change in the state of affairs in Palestine can likewise be attributed to democratic scruples. Steps such as imposing the wishes

of 600,000 Jews on 1,200,000 Arabs, or recommending of partition over the wishes of the Arab majority, were a perversion of democracy and consequently could not be entertained. On the one hand, the AAC held that the Jews, a minority everywhere else throughout the world, needed to be a majority somewhere so as to be able to survive. The committee asked itself whether – in Palestine of all places – it should subject the Jews to majority rule, and decree that here, too, they were not to attain a majority? But, as we have noted, making Palestine into a Jewish state would not be a democratic act, nor would the transfer of its Arab inhabitants to neighbouring countries: 'I, as a citizen of Texas, would not like to be told if I could go to Virginia,' responded Judge Hutcheson.[26] Democratic principles did not make life easy for the AAC. Conversely, there was the urgency of solving the problem of the Jewish refugees in Europe. The committee members asked themselves: in recommending that these Jews be allowed into Palestine, albeit merely as a humanitarian solution of the DP problem, are we not lending a hand to colonization of the country, overriding the wishes of the majority and transforming that majority into a minority?[27] The cure the AAC found for its democratic scruples lay in perceiving the migration of 100,000 Jews to Palestine as a humanitarian act for which it saw no alternative and whose main purpose was to relieve the distress in the European DP camps. The AAC affirmed that this exodus did not, and would not, come in support of the Zionist demand for a state in Palestine. The country would belong neither to Zionists nor Arabs. Thus, the AAC appealed simultaneously for ameliorated conditions to facilitate resettlement of the Jews in Europe.

Another important factor in the AAC's refusal to recommend one solution or another was its wish to come up with a report acceptable to all twelve members. The unanimity constraint, and Foreign Secretary Bevin's pledge to implement any report acceptable to all of the committee's British and American members, led the AAC to rally around the lowest common denominator, which in this case precluded recommendation of any substantial change in Palestine. Thus, the recommendation for the establishment of an Arab state in Palestine, and the conflicting demand for a Jewish state, were rejected, inter alia, in the interests of unanimity.

Finally, impressions from their tours of Palestine, notably the agricultural and other achievements of the Jewish community, could

not fail to leave their mark on the AAC's members. While the Palestinian Arab side was perceived, at best, as anthropological folklore to be preserved, the Jewish side was viewed, mainly by the committee's American members, in the following terms:

> How my Vermont father, who used to glory in the land cleared by him and his brozhers [sic] would have been amazed at the greater deeds of the Palestinian Jews! ... Vermont is almost stoneless by comparison. I came away from these farms less cocky and more humble and not quite so certain that American pioneers left no successors.[28]

> I left Washington pretty strongly anti-Zionist ... But when you see at first hand what these Jews have done in Palestine ... the greatest creative effort in modern world. The Arabs are not equal to anything like it and destroy all that the Jews have done ... This we must not let them do.[29]

These two quotes should be supplemented with a comment by Richard Crossman:

> To the American ... the notion of the pioneer who goes into the wilderness and turns it into a land of great agriculture and great industry, is intensely sympathetic ... America sympathises with the National Home, because it is something very American ... Whereas to Englishmen there is something synthetic in the idea that somebody packs his bag and picks it up and travels somewhere and then becomes a citizen of that country and claims it as his native land.[30]

A further perception to which the AAC clung, rendering it significant to our discussion, was its view of nationalism. The time period of the inquiry is important: it was immediately after the Second World War, when national and ethnic problems (e.g., the Sudeten Germans) were among the causes to which the catastrophe was attributed. The post-war world sought stability – a goal ostensibly threatened by nationalism or ethnicity. These phenomena were associated with emotionally romantic yearnings for a long-lost past – a time when the state of the nation was immeasurably better than at present, inspiring the urgent necessity of restoring the ancient order – with their undertones of Nazism. They seemed, therefore, to be a sure-fire recipe for a rerun of the war and its associated upheavals. The AAC's unfavourable view of nationalism, which its members

condemned in harsh terms, emerged in the course of its inquiry. This found marked expression in Hourani's testimony. The AAC regarded Zionism, the national movement of the Jewish people, no less than the Arab national movement, as 'the intransigent nationality'. In the past, the commission found, there was an ocean of Arab civilization; now, nationalism was dividing it up into tiny segments, i.e., nation-states increasingly intolerant of anyone dissimilar. In the past, non-Muslims and non-Arabs had lived amongst the Arab people, their distinctness being no hindrance; now, with both sides motivated by nationalism, violent conflict was increasing. Hourani's reply failed to shift the AAC from this fundamental outlook. His statement may have been factual and realistic; but he gained little sympathy from the inquiry with its anti-nationalist outlook:

> Hourani: We all recognize that there are dangerously unstable elements in nationalism. Nationalism goes wrong when the nation worships itself; it falls into sin, but to say that is one thing and to condemn nationalism is another. I believe there is and can be a healthy nationalism.[31]

IV

We have already mentioned, at the outset, the emphasis that was laid throughout the hearings on matters common to the inhabitants of Arab Palestine and the other Arab states and peoples. This connection was of no help to the Palestinians, as their case seemed to be swallowed up in the overall Arab cause. Likewise, Islam's blurring of boundaries – i.e., Muslim Arab Palestine – was not helpful to autonomous advocacy of the Palestinian case. When Palestine was portrayed as a – not particularly large – portion of Greater Syria, the Palestinian cause was again obscured. The stress on these three links merely aided those seeking to avoid facing up to the results of granting the whole of Palestine to its Arab inhabitants, or who sought to despatch the Palestinians to other portions of the Arab and Muslim world, there to pursue their political, cultural and religious expression and development.

The Arab Office, where Albert Hourani officiated as chief researcher, highlighted this perception in its publication *The Future of Palestine*. In rejecting the notion of partition, the Office stressed that the Arabs were prohibited from giving up so much as a single square

mile of Palestine, since they were bound to preserve the land for the world's 60 million Arabs and 400 million Muslims.[32] (In contrast with the Palestinian Arab position that broadened the ethnic, religious and geographical arena, playing down differences between Palestine and the rest of the Arab world, the Zionist case sharply focused the issue to a very specific stretch of territory, and a well-defined and distinct ethnic and religious entity.)

In 1946, the year he testified before the AAC, Hourani published his *Great Britain and the Arab World*.[33] The book stressed the monolithic nature of the Arab world, refuting those who pointed to its variegated assortment of races, religions and peoples. That view, argued Hourani, was a fiction invented by the British and French imperialists (and the Zionist movement) who excuse their inability to foist their order upon the Arab world with the contention that it is too confused and divided to be subjected to any order. But in reality, Hourani argued, a very distinct unity prevails throughout the Arab world, resting upon a number of elements common to all, such as the Arabic language, shared racial origins in tribes that migrated from the Arabian peninsula (engendering historical memory, myths, traditions and customs, particularly in the Middle East's heartland: Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq) and the Islamic religion, linked to the Arab world with ties so intimate that many regard the religion and the region as a single entity (particularly as Arab jurisprudence and ethics are derived from Islam).[34] Palestine was described – aptly – as Arab Asia, and a geographical part of Syria, its inhabitants belonging to the Syrian branch of the Arab family of nations. Accordingly, the Jewish demand for a state in Palestine would sever the country from the Syrian trunk.[35]

Here, too, Hourani's portrayal was realistic and to the point. But its impact on the AAC in 1946 led in a direction that Hourani certainly never expected. Philip Hitti, Professor of Semitic Literature at Princeton University and one of the greatest Arabists of his generation (the third edition of his *History of the Arabs*, first published in 1937, was put at the disposal of the AAC's research team[36]) told the committee members that Palestine is non-existent: 'It is only a myth, the mischievous product of Sunday schools.' Palestine is Syria, the southern portion of Syria, Hitti reiterated.[37] It was now easier for opponents of the Palestinian cause to argue that, since the Palestinians were an exact duplicate of the Arab world, they would suffer no harm

if their national aspirations found expression in some other Arab capital, rather than Jerusalem.

With the Palestinian cause relegated to the sidelines by the Arab world, Islam and Greater Syria – each of which made it impossible to view Arab Palestine as an independent entity – matters were made even worse by two aspects that likewise diminished the Palestinians' rights and the authenticity of their cause. The Arab testimony to the AAC was worked out in negotiations between Britain and the Arab League, and a number of Arab states – contacts which involved virtually no consultation with the Palestinians or their leadership that had been reconstituted (after its dispersal to all quarters by the British on the eve of the Second World War) especially for the purpose of appearing before the commission.[38] If the Palestinians were consulted, this was done merely to pre-empt complaints that a party to the conflict had been left out. The following quotations testify to the degree that the Palestinians were excluded, and the arrogance with which they were treated:

> They do rely on the Arab League for fighting their case, the Arab is by nature a chap who, if he can get somebody else to do the work for him, will be very pleased to sit down and do nothing.[39]

> Once the Arab states accept any solution ... the local Arabs would be of little account.[40]

The inevitable consequence of the Arab states' takeover of the Palestinian cause was that Arab League deliberations surrounding the AAC and the Palestinians' testimony before it became subject to inter-Arab bickering. This is not the place to elaborate, but whether it was the Hashemites versus the Saudis, Amir Abdallah of Trans-Jordan versus the Syrians, or Iraq's Nuri Sa'id versus Egypt's Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha (secretary of the Arab League), their deliberations on the Palestinian Arab testimony before the AAC were permeated with their own differences. Lord Killearn, British ambassador to Cairo, noted in his diary: 'Nuri [Sa*id] said that of all idiotic performances he had ever taken part in, this completely beat anything in his experience.'[41] How apt Hourani's conclusion as worded in his splendid *A History of the Arab Peoples*: 'the formation of the Arab League, with its commitment to support the Palestinians, seemed to offer them a strength which in the end turned to be illusory.'[42]

Another factor detrimental to the authenticity of the Palestinian

cause – a factor whose implicit conclusion the AAC ultimately adopted as solution – was the doubt cast on the potency of the Palestinians' objections to the Zionist enterprise. They are aroused, the commission was told, their hatred is not genuine; their opposition is not so profound, and could be moderated, or possibly overcome entirely, by ameliorated economic and social living standards. The incitement theory was espoused by circles in the British Labour Party, and left-wingers in Palestine and elsewhere: it was the Arab world's ruling class – which they regarded as corrupt and anachronistic – that was fanning the flames of Arab–Jewish conflict.[43] Ostensibly, the Arab fellah had more in common with the Jewish settlers than with the Arab effendi class.

It should be noted immediately that the committee got a good insight into the deep conflict between the peoples in Palestine: the only place the AAC found Jews and Arabs coexisting was at the asylum for the insane in Acre. (The AAC's American secretary, Evan Wilson, commented: 'In Palestine, you don't have to be crazy to mix with the other – but it helps.') Richard Crossman was also well attuned to the ferocity and authenticity of the conflict:

> Go up into the mountains and live with the Arabs, see the toughness ... then look down below and, in the streaming plain, see the rich, powerful, Zionist invader. He has got your plain; when will he come up and capture the mountains, put his electric cables across them? When will he dump down beside your village a blot across the sky line, the Germanic block houses of Jewish settlers?[44]

Nonetheless, there was great concern on the Arab side, and in the Arab Office, that political difficulties and the apparently intractable conflict would ultimately prompt an imposed political solution. In place of concrete political steps, there would be recommendations in the social, economic and educational domains. These would rest upon two assumptions: those preoccupied with economic and social development would not set their minds to political matters; secondly, the hatred and opposition of the Palestinian Arabs towards the Zionist enterprise, although sincere, stemmed from economic and educational differences – if the latter were to be bridged, hatred would evaporate.

The Arab Office, in warning against this view of matters, was not far off the mark.[45] Since the situation it encountered was deemed impossible by the committee, the AAC's report did indeed set aside

the quest for a political solution for Palestine, instead submitting a series of recommendations for bridging the economic and educational gap, the disparity in social and medical services, etc.: 'Our examination of conditions in Palestine led us to the conclusion that one of the chief causes of friction is the great disparity between the Jewish and the Arab standards of living.'[46] Reducing this disparity, it was hoped, would reduce the ferocity of the conflict; the AAC suggested taxing the Jewish sector and using the revenue to pay for the recommended steps towards bridging the gap. A familiar snare for those seeking to bypass the confrontation and dodge thorough treatment of the problem, this bias among the AAC towards dealing with standards of living rather than questions of nation and state, was not affected by the testimony of Albert Hourani.

V

Hourani's testimony was preceded by a series of witnesses for the Arab side. One of them was Jamal al-Husayni, only recently released from exile in Rhodesia and restored to his membership of the likewise recently reconstituted Arab Higher Committee, who spoke of the inevitability of armed conflict in Palestine:

> [W]ar had always been the way people found to resolve their conflicts, and why should the people of Palestine be 'deprived'? Let us do it. Why not-do-it? You have done it in every war of your history ... Why should not we have this war? Why should you laugh at it? It is quite natural. This is God's way. That is God's creation.[47]

Al-Husayni's words reflected fatalism, possibly weariness induced by a prolonged exile, and apparently, a measure of apathy.[48] They gave the impression that the committee's deliberations did not evoke much interest among Palestinian Arab leaders, the latter not even attending the hearings that featured the testimonies of representatives of the Arab Higher Committee (although seats were reserved for them even as 'hundreds were turned away daily for lack of space').[49]

Whereas the Jewish witnesses supported their testimony with copious statistical data, tables, figures, graphs and diagrams, the Palestinian side seemed to rely mainly on 'the power of the spoken word'.[50] This attitude was compounded by the refusal of the Palestinian

Arabs to show the AAC 'picturesque villagers', lest the impression its members drew from the Arab side be coloured by anthropological folklore, leading it to adopt what Hourani defined as a 'nature preserve' attitude.[51] The traditional Palestinian leaders' style of exposition may have led to Crossman's supercilious remark that he hoped the future would produce a representative Palestinian Arab leadership 'to replace the present set of charming degenerates.'[52]

The Palestinian Arab testimony before the AAC concluded with the representatives of the Arab Office, Albert Hourani and Ahmad al-Shuqayri. Both were youthful, in their early thirties (the committee called them 'our young Arab friends') evoking expectations that their testimony would not resemble that of the Arab Higher Committee (British officials described the Arab Office delegates as 'free from the obsolete catchwords and myopia of the old gang, who could speak the language of today').[53]

The Arab Office had been established in 1945 under the direction of Musa al-Alami, with the purpose of informing public opinion in the United States and Britain on events in Palestine and the Arab world; to this end, its offices in London and Washington published the *Arab News Bulletin*, a series of pamphlets and other papers. The prestige of Alami and his research team, including Albert Hourani and his brother Cecil, endowed these publications with serious professional status. In May 1948, with the outbreak of hostilities, the Washington bureau was closed with its London counterpart shut down shortly afterwards.[54]

Arab Office testimony included written material – three volumes entitled *The Problem of Palestine* (typewritten, their pages unnumbered) and a 14-page printed summary subsequently circulated among the general public in the United States and Britain (*Pamphlet on Public Affairs* No. 3). Also submitted to the committee was Hourani's memorandum '*Is Zionism the Solution of the Jewish Problem*?' (distributed later as Pamphlet on Arab Affairs No. 2). The three volumes of *The Problem of Palestine* set out the Arab position on the conflict, comprising a series of memoranda on specific issues relating to Palestine: past promises that had remained unfulfilled, the Palestinian view of the Balfour Declaration, possible solutions to the conflict, etc. The main motif of these volumes was the portrayal of Zionism as a political national movement, showing that aspects outwardly of a non-political nature – such as Jewish immigration into

Palestine (ostensibly humanitarian) or land purchase (ostensibly economic) – were an integral part of its political strategy. The Office rejected the assumption that development of the Arab economic sector in Palestine would diminish opposition to Zionist designs on Palestine. Such an assumption rested either upon a false psychology or upon the equally false assumption that Arab opposition to Zionism sprung 'only from ignorance abetted by malice' and would disappear 'with the spread of enlightenment and prosperity' among the peasantry.[55]

The Arab Office rejected all the compromise proposals put forward for a solution of the Palestine problem, 'all gestures of despair' (in his testimony Hourani considered these compromise proposals in detail; see below). The motif of this opposition, reiterated in relation to each of the plans (e.g., for a binational state, partition, preservation of the status quo), pointed to their inconclusiveness which only would perpetuate and exacerbate the conflict. These volumes reflect a sincere effort to portray the Palestinian Arab cause as a genuine struggle for national independence, as part of the upsurge of Arab nationalism throughout the Arab world. It was not a private pursuit of power or office by some personage or other; it was part of the pan-Arab campaign to replace the Ottoman order with a more wholesome Arab society founded upon universal and Western notions. Democracy, elimination of the vestiges of the feudal system of land-ownership, emphasis on broad popular support for Arab nationalism, the extensive awareness of social reform and progressive social theory, pointers to the emergence of a budding Arab working class, increased political awareness among women, advances in culture, education and science – all this was discussed in the volumes of *The Problem of Palestine*.

An additional leitmotif was opposition to and refutation of the notion of a 'higher civilization,' more particularly the right of an advanced nation or culture, when encountering an inferior people 'if not to dispossess them, at least to share the land with them."[56] The Office wrote further:

> Almost inevitably an Englishman or an American ... recalls the history of his own people, he tends to understand the Jewish colonisation in Palestine and Arab resistance to it in terms of white colonisation of America and Australia and the resistance of the Red Indians and Aborigines. The temptation to this is all the greater if ... his image of the Arabs is of a few backward nomads ... easily to be moved out or else concentrated in reserves where

> their peculiar dress and customs can be carefully preserved for the delight of the tourist ... he will tend to think that to champion the rights of the Arabs is no more than misplaced sentimentalism.[57]

Describing the Western penetration of the Arab world and its outcome in his *Syria and Lebanon – A Political Essay*, published in the same year as his testimony before the AAC, Hourani pointed out the outrage Arabs sensed at the disdain the West harboured for them in all material matters. This disdain was doubly offensive when enveloped within a romantic veneration of everything inferior, primitive and exotic.[58]

This presentation appeared to reflect a genuine danger hanging over Arab Palestine. Hugh Dalton, at that time secretary of the Treasury in the Labour government, spelled out a view that underlined the anxieties of the Arab side: 'he felt bad that the Jewish resettlement should be held up merely by the intransigence of a backward local population.'[59] Richard Crossman resorted to similar terms:

> America sympathises with the National Home because [it] is something very American ... Americans, therefore, are liable in their estimate of the Arabs' side to think of them as Red Indians, and ... would find a certain embarrassment in too repeated a reminder that the rights of the indigenous population must at all costs be preserved against the needs of colonist.[60]

Equally significant are the views of some members of the AAC. Here too, the Arab Office pinpointed sentiments that threatened the Arab side:

> Buxton ... developed the idea of 'eminent domain' citing as an example the United States' conquest of the Indians and the inevitable giving way of a backward people before a more modern and practical one. He thought the strong people would naturally replace weaker ones.[61]

Hourani pointed to the allure he believed Zionism held for modern Western political thinking, the latter discovering its expression and reflection in elements of Zionism such as bourgeois nationalism, the Tolstoyan cult of peasant-like simplicity, the adulation of capitalist efficiency, democratic socialism and communism, including even Nazism (*sic*), and extending to the glamour of the underground militias. These elements exercised their fascination upon the romanticism of

the modern West, spiced further by the Jews with their acumen, enthusiasm and tenacity. The Palestinian Jew was no mere reflection of the West; he represented norms and ideals that the West cherished: a gallant little people, with a rich and tormented past; pioneers facing up to the savage wilderness; planners drawing upon science to redouble productivity; farmers abjuring the egoism of their private existence for the benefit of the kibbutz collective; the warrior-terrorist challenging established authority – all these entranced the West, which saw in them a simple, new world of hope, however violent and zealous. Hourani's analysis went further: Zionism had made its advent at a time when Christian belief had been shunted aside in the West. All that remained was a vague moral idealism, with equally vague memories of the Bible's tales and symbols. Accordingly, the West found in Zionism the realisation of an idea with humane and idealistic echoes of the Old Testament: 'Once the Incarnation was half forgotten or explained away, the return of the Jews to Palestine might seem no less God's manifest will than the exodus from Egypt.'[62]

The testimonies of the parties, Zionists and Arabs, became a tussle for the sympathies of the AAC, each side going all out to demolish the contentions of its adversaries (in this respect, Hourani would prove the most effective on the Arab side). To quote some of the contentions of the Zionist side:

> As far as the Middle East was concerned, the French Revolutionmight never have happened. For the doctrine of human rights and personal liberty had not penetrated the citadels of Islamic authoritarianism. Similarly, the Industrial Revolution might never have come to pass. The period of invention and discovery in the natural sciences, which had increased the productivity of all human effort and transformed the horizons of human welfare, had passed by the Arab East unknown and unheeded. The agricultural resources of these countries had dwindled through human neglect and persistent erosion. Whatever raw materials or sources of wealth lay beneath the soil were unexposed and unexploited. In fact, the squalor of the Middle East had become accepted as an integral part of its natural scenery. And together with this poverty, both as cause and effect, there went ignorance and illiteracy.[63]

The passages quoted, together with other written testimonies, make palpable the feeling on the part of the Palestinian Arabs of a great

danger, of an impending catastrophe, and of the sense of powerlessness in confronting it. This impression is quite unlike that drawn from reading the Arab witnesses' spoken testimony, which sometimes evokes a smile, such as Jamal al-Husayni's 'complaint', already mentioned, that the Palestinians – Arabs and Jews – were being 'deprived' of the right to resolve their differences by war, 'a privilege enjoyed' freely by the Western world. Others, such as Ahmad Shuqayri, evoked criticism, particularly for their verbal violence. At the conclusion of Shuqayri's testimony, Mr Justice Singleton had the following to say:

> Perhaps a word of advice from me will not do any good, but the less talk there is about violence the better for this world.
>
> Ahmad Shuqayri: Exactly.
>
> Mr. Justice Singleton: Thank you.

As already noted, Ahmed Shuqayri was the first spokesman on behalf of the Arab Office. He cautioned the AAC that its decisions relating to Palestine had best apply the yardstick of which side could cause the greater trouble. If it was a matter of fomenting trouble and violence, 'the Arabs are prepared to break the record, and not only in Palestine'. Furthermore, the Zionist movement was the Jewish people's greatest foe, no less of a menace than the Nazis. Giving in to the Zionist demand to alleviate the plight of the Jews in Europe by permitting their emigration to Palestine would only shift the arena of battle and suffering, from Europe to Asia. Accordingly:

> Let me assure the honourable committee out of sincerity and honesty, not out of threat or intimidation, that if the present state of affairs is to continue, there will come a time, not far away, when some sort of Committee of Inquiry will be set up to deal with Jewish homelessness in the Arab World – a tragedy which can only be avoided by the Zionists and their supporters in the world.[64]

Shuqayri questioned the very necessity of the AAC inquiry, especially condemning the inclusion therein of Britain and the United States. (The US Congress had come out in support of the creation of a Jewish state, with declarations that outdid the Jewish organizations in their fervour; for decades, the British had failed to live up to their pledges to the Palestinians, most recently those included in the 1939 White Paper.) The absence of the Soviet Union, the Arab states, and

representatives of the Arab League, gave the inquiry a pro-Zionist bias. The British had already shown how they favour the Jews: whereas the British army had employed considerable violence in putting down the Arab revolt of the 1930s – hanging hundreds of Arabs, demolishing hundreds of homes, placing thousands under arrest and applying torture to extract confessions – the British government was turning a blind eye to Jewish terrorism against the local Arab population. Furthermore, 'to invoke the admiration of men keen about progress, the Zionists contend that it is they who are better equipped to develop the country. But is this not the Nazi claim to dominate Europe on the ground of a better order and more prosperous life?'[65]

Shuqayri proposed to create in Palestine an independent and democratic Arab state which would safeguard the rights of the country's Jewish inhabitants; to that end the Palestinian Arabs were prepared to make their commitment iron-clad by adopting a constitution on the British or American model. ('It is we, the Arabs, as evidenced by the records of history, who have always practised what we preached').[66] Shuqayri argued that the Palestinian Arabs possessed but one single asset, hinting at the more numerous assets, in propaganda and the media, controlled by the other party:

> After all, we have nothing material to give. We have no votes to constitute members of Parliament or Congress. We have not the gigantic financial enterprises of Wall Street in New York and the City in London to lure consciences and direct minds. We have not the press, the publishing houses, the pressure groups and the radio system to mobilize public opinion. We have not the highly organized capitalized bodies of propaganda scattered all over the world to marshal humanitarian and democratic forces. All that we have is justice, pure and simple; and our determination to stick to our causes.[67]

Shuqayri's concluding remarks hinted at a new generation of Arabs who would pursue their interests by resort to novel means unlike those of the traditional leadership with whom the West had become accustomed to deal. This generation was to produce the elite that would lead the Arab world and work for its interests, rather than those of others:

> Let it be known that we are not anti-British, anti-Soviet, anti-American or anti-Semitic. Equally, we are not pro-Nazis, pro-Fascists. We are what we are – Arabs and nothing but Arabs. So help us God [68]

Albert Hourani began his testimony on a different note. Judge Hutcheson asked him whether he had assisted in the composition of a number of memoranda submitted to the AAC. Hourani's answer in the affirmative prompted the following exchange:

> Judge Hutcheson: I was impressed by two things in them. Without regard to the merits of what they do, they certainly are clear, laconic and simply put forth. The other is I noticed in the paper the statement that Syria was the center of the Arab world. I wondered if you are a Syrian.
> Mr. Hourani: I am a Syrian (laughter).[69]

As final witness for the Arab side, Hourani began his testimony by reiterating absolute Arab opposition to the imposition of a Jewish state. Transforming a majority into a minority was an injustice, as was denying the Palestinian Arabs self-rule until the Jews became a majority. The Arab solution for Palestine – a state now, with an Arab majority and full civic rights for the Jews – was a definitive solution; any other would only entail injustice, disorder and unrest. The Zionists would agree to the Arab solution perforce, recognizing that they could not overcome it. Any other solution – a compromise solution, a pro-Jewish solution certainly – was merely a recipe for perpetuation of the conflict.

Hourani swiftly moved on to consider compromise proposals, whether already submitted or pending: partition; a bi-national state; or preservation of the status quo (viz., continuation of the British mandate) along with a recommendation for admission of 100,000 Jews from Europe. The Arabs rejected cession of the whole of Palestine, and equally, of any portion thereof; hence, they opposed partition. (On a later occasion, Hourani again denied that partition was a compromise: in his words, it was a pro-Jewish solution that responded to Jewish demands, albeit not all.) Listing the snags and difficulties entailed in implementing partition (for example, the considerable Arab minority that would remain in the Jewish state) Hourani claimed that it would not put an end to the conflict: the Jewish state would seek – indeed, would be obliged – to expand at the

expense of the Palestinian state:

> The Nazis fastened their domination upon Europe by making use of every weakness they could find in the European body politic. Just so a Jewish State would hover like a vulture over the Arab body politic, waiting to strike at every point of disaffection or disease.[70]

Conflicts would swiftly emerge between the Jewish state and its Arab neighbours, principally in relation to the manner that the former treated its Arab minority. Accordingly, domestic reasons would draw the Jewish state into conflict with its neighbours and into seeking expansion at their expense. Population growth in the Jewish state, the necessity of acquiring markets for its industrial produce, and mistreatment of its Arab minority (up to and including deportation into the territory of its neighbours, for the Jewish state would suffer from over-population) would all contribute to a violent and conflict-ridden Middle East.

Likewise, Hourani found numerous flaws in the idea of a bi-national state, as submitted to the AAC by Dr Judah Magnes, president of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The core notion – a state belonging exclusively neither to Jews nor Arabs, but shared, with an open-door policy on Jewish immigration – was promptly rejected by the Arab side; the Arabs perceived Jewish immigration as the greatest threat to their existence. For a bi-national state to overcome internal communal differences, it also required a measure of cooperation, trust and unity. But such cooperation was presently non-existent in Palestine. Consequently, the state would soon find itself at a dead end, for communal disputes would preclude implementation of any policy either side was apprehensive of. This dead end would draw external super-power intervention 'to get the show back on the road', and the state would not long remain in control of its own fate.

The Arabs harboured their greatest apprehensions towards the third compromise proposal (justly so, it being the one the AAC ultimately recommended): postponement of a decision on the country's political future, along with a recommendation for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews. In other words: perpetuation of the British mandate, non-implementation of the White Paper (which, as will be recalled, prescribed the creation of an Arab state in Palestine) and open doors to Jewish immigration. The Arabs opposed this proposal on dual

grounds: they resisted the denial of their right to independence, and they objected to Jewish immigration. In Hourani's words, 'we have not seen the United States or Britain opening their doors to Jewish immigration; conversely, the US Congress called for Palestine to be opened up to Jewish immigrants.' Jewish immigration was no mere humanitarian act, argued Hourani. It was a step towards placing the country under Jewish political domination. It was therefore evident that the third compromise proposal, like the other two, did not hold the key to termination of the conflict. On the contrary, this solution left room for further protests and pressures, further inquiries, further reports and further, interminable, policy zigzags.

'I can understand what induces people to adopt the third proposal,' said Hourani. Although it failed to resolve the long-term problems, it did offer a remedy to the pressing problems of the short term. It would empty the DP camps in Europe of their inmates; Jewish terrorism would be appeased by the admission of Jews into Palestine; the Arabs could perhaps be expected to respond with less than excessive violence, and HMG and the US Administration would gain a breathing space wherein to plan a future solution for Palestine. However, Hourani cautioned, even if these assumptions were correct, they were valid only in the short term; in spite of the temporary lull, the core problem remained. Even the assumption that this proposal would evoke a mild response from the Arab side was unfounded.

On the face of it, there were those who regarded this third proposal as refuting Zionist demands: Jewish immigration could never create a Jewish majority, for within a few years the natural increase of the Arab population would mean that it exceeded the number of Jews in Palestine. Accordingly, the advantage of this proposal was in laying to rest Arab apprehensions about the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine, and in convincing the Zionists once and for all that they had no hope of attaining such a majority. But, Hourani warned, when Zionism reached that crucial point, it was liable to effect other solutions with the aim of transforming the Arab majority into a minority, for example deportation of Arabs to neighbouring Arab states.

Hourani went on to consider the solution the Arab side proposed – independence now with an Arab majority. In fact, he said, this was a compromise proposal: for the past twenty-five years, the Arabs had protested against the Jewish immigration foisted upon them; affirming

that the future Palestinian state would accept these immigrants as citizens with equal rights (in spite of Arab objections to their immigration) constituted a compromise on the part of the Arabs. (They would not be driven out, Hourani promised; the Palestinian Arab state would hardly wish to exacerbate the world's refugee problem.) Moreover, the pursuit of a Palestinian state did not stem from extremism:

> If that community has an Arab character, if the Palestinian State is to be an Arab State, that is not because of racial prejudice or fanaticism but because of two inescapable facts: the first that Palestine has an Arab indigenous population, and the second that Palestine by geography and history is an essential part of the Arab world.[71]

This quotation defines the elements Hourani included within the concept of nationalism: the population's wishes, and its awareness of history and geography. Below we shall deal further with his understanding of the term 'nationalism' as reflected in his writings over the years and remark here only that Hourani's verbal and written testimony to the AAC did not focus on the nationalism motif. We have already mentioned the questions that American Judge Hutcheson directed to Hourani on this subject; when the latter failed to elaborate on the point, the judge refused to let the matter pass, demanding to know his views of nationalism and its extreme manifestations. Possibly, Hourani sensed that the time – shortly after the end of Second World War – was not ripe for inducing the AAC to consider the issue of nationalism. And, as we saw above, the AAC – in particular its American chairman – made no bones about the reservations they had about the concept or the associations it called up.

Hourani went on to play down the distinction between right and sufferance in reference to the link between the Zionist cause and Palestine. In relation to the Zionist presence in Palestine, it was of no significance whether it was maintained by right, or under the patronage, protection and consent of the Palestinian state; the actual contradiction was between goodwill and force, not right and sufferance, that is,

> ... [w]hether the Jews wish to live in Palestine with the goodwill of the Arabs, or whether they wish to rely on force, their own or others. What the Arabs are asking is not that the Jews should be

> here on sufferance in the bad sense, but that they should recognise their need for Arab goodwill. This is not humiliating to the Jews, to recognise that they are dependent on normal, good relations with Arabs. Moreover, it is true that the Jews here in Palestine do need the Arabs' goodwill and even if they were here by-right, that would not make any difference at all to this fundamental fact.[72]

There was the risk, Hourani added, that the Zionists would oppose an Arab solution for Palestine. But whatever the solution applied in Palestine, there was the risk of resort to force by one of the sides. It was also clear that the risk of military confrontation which was already growing would increase in the future. Accordingly, there was nothing to be gained from waiting or postponing the solution to the future; there was a present danger of violence that would only increase in future. As to the outcome of such a military conflict, there were two possibilities: either the Jewish side was bluffing about its military aims and capability; if so, it was preferable to call that bluff now, before it became real; or those military aims were genuine, in which case it was certainly preferable that the showdown came now rather than in the future, when the Jewish side gained in strength. To this end, it was necessary to confront the Jewish Agency (a 'monstrous organization' in Hourani's words) and draw its fangs, the sooner the better, for it was the only way peace would prevail in Palestine. The Zionists needed Arab goodwill, added Hourani, but they would not seek it as long as they hoped to implement their designs in Palestine. Only when they faced a decisive and definitive solution in Palestine, in the form of an independent Palestinian state, would they abandon their hopes and begin a pursuit of Arab goodwill and friendship. Accordingly, the definitive solution in Palestine, in the form of the immediate creation of a government – even if it provoked violence – could meet an immediate and fundamental precondition for Arab–Jewish understanding: the end to Zionist hopes and dreams.

Every solution in Palestine had its moral aspect. That aspect had repercussions upon Arab–Jewish relations in the Arab countries, and upon the Arab majority's tolerance towards the Jews; upon the relations between Jews and the non-Jewish world; and upon the relations between Arabs and the Western world. Evidently, Hourani said, a Zionist solution for the Jewish people (establishment of a state in Palestine) conveyed a despair of Europe and European democracy. It was an admission that Europe had failed, that the Jews could not

depend upon European democracy. Furthermore:

> The second query is a query whether even if a Jewish State were established in Palestine the Jews would become a normal nation like all nations. I do not believe that the unwillingness of the Jews is due simply to a combination of political, economic and social causes. I believe it lies much deeper than that and can ultimately only be explained in theological or metaphysical terms, and it seems to me that if the Zionists came back to Palestine and had their dream of a Jewish State, their unlikeness and all that gives rise to troubles to themselves and others would change its form, perhaps not for the better.[73]

Likewise, the Arabs' relations with the West would be swayed by the solution applied in Palestine. The Arab world was now endeavouring to adopt Western civilization and standards. There were two possibilities. The first was an opening up of the Arab world to the West and imbibing as much as possible of everything that met its own needs, to be blended with the Arabs' own traditions and culture, while fostering Arab trust and tolerance towards the nations of the West, on a basis of equality and cooperation. The second possibility would have the Arabs turning their backs on the West and its world, with spiritual withdrawal and hatred, rejecting everything the West had to offer, except the weapons it manufactured, to which the Arabs would resort in their war against the West. The course the Arabs chose would depend upon the Western attitude towards them. Thus, Hourani revealed the junction between Zionism, Arabs and the West – Zionism was a test of Western intentions in their regard: as long as the Arabs considered Zionism a threat, they would find it hard to maintain relations of dignity, cooperation and tolerance with the West.

It would be no exaggeration to affirm that Hourani's testimony contained numerous elements that ultimately convinced the AAC against recommending the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. From that viewpoint, his testimony provided the best possible service to the Arab cause, 'the most effective of the statements made from the Arab point of view'.[74] Equally intriguing was the dialogue among the AAC's members immediately after Hourani's testimony. The committee complimented Hourani; he had endeavoured to defend the Arab case and undermine that of the Zionists, 'and you have done both in a way which would provoke as little hostility as possible.'

In his replies to the questions of the committee members, Hourani reiterated the need to find a solution for the Palestine conflict as soon as possible; the matter would get ever more complex in the future. He also reiterated his concern for the situation of the Jews in Arab countries should the conflict remain unresolved or a Jewish state be created in Palestine. Hourani repeated his rejection of the notion of a bi-national state: only a small proportion of its citizens would be loyal, whereas an Arab state would have the trust of a considerable portion of its inhabitants who would do their utmost to make that state a success. There was momentary confusion when Richard Crossman asked who Hourani represented: 'Who chose you, on whose behalf do you speak, so that we can gauge the extent that your statement has validity, commitment and backing?' 'I speak as a private person,' Hourani replied, 'I am not entitled to make my words binding upon anyone.' Several committee members asked Hourani whether he believed that an Arab state in Palestine, or the Arab majority presently existing in that country, would consent to family reunification, i.e., permit relatives of Palestinian Jews presently in DP camps in Europe – principally, children and the elderly – to come to Palestine to join their families.

Hourani's response denied that there was a humanitarian dimension to the problem, stressing that Jewish immigration into Palestine was never without its political aspects: 'Any immigrants who come into the country, whether or not they are young and able to fight, do add to the Jewish element and bring nearer the day when the Jews will be able to say that they are a majority.'[75] (In relation to the sale of Arab land to Jews, Hourani attributed it to that 'desire for gain, which attacks not only Arab landowners but other landowners as well.'[76])

We have already noted the Texan judge's questions relating to what he regarded as the negative contribution of present-day nationalism to the Arab world, and its want of tolerance towards those unlike it. 'You are speaking in a vacuum, not in present realities,' Hutcheson remarked in response to Hourani's statement about the tolerance the Arab world had demonstrated in medieval times towards the Jews in its midst. The present-day Arab world was plagued with nationalism, and such tolerance could therefore not be expected, added the judge. Hourani replied:

> I simply brought forward this illustration [of the status of Jews in the mediaeval Arab world] in order to show that there is in the Arab tradition and civilization a certain idea of tolerance which may be clothed in a different form today, but nevertheless exists.[77]

As Hourani's testimony drew to a close, there was a brief exchange with the American judge. The latter argued that the Powers (in his term, 'the Christian nations') had created existing realities in Palestine, namely, had permitted the Jews to migrate there. Those Powers could not now disown their own actions, or events in Palestine, and just hand that country to the Arabs:

> I should say I fully appreciate your argument; it looks like you have been handed a pretty tough deal in having no say at all as to who should immigrate here. I know in our country in Texas they would start putting the Mexicans back, I should not like it. I am not diminishing your case at all. I am trying to say that our problem is not your case, it is not the Jews' case. Our problem is to take the situation which has grown up and try to settle it. You see no way out of it. You do not see the justice that has arisen out of a situation which has been created, we will say, through the fault of the nations of the world; is there not something owed by the nations of the world to this situation they have created here rather than just saying: 'give it back to the Arabs, let them wrestle it'?
>
> Hourani: The argument I tried to put forward was that the proposals which the Arabs made could be justified not only on the grounds and principles of justice, but also on the ground that they are the only proposals which offer the slightest chance of avoiding some dreadful catastrophe to this country.[78]

This quotation, which winds up Hourani's testimony, contains the virtual essence of the AAC's inquiry, extending to embrace the treatment handed out to Mexicans in Texas. Summing up the testimonies of Shuqayri and Hourani, the intelligence officer of the British forces in Palestine described the former as 'bellicose both in matter and delivery', while saying of Hourani that 'he won the hearts of the committee even if he may not have won their minds'.[79]

VI

The Arab world, its encounter with the West – which for Hourani included Europe, America and Russia, and hence Zionism too – and

the outcome of that encounter (Arab nationalism) were topics that Hourani returned to again and again over fifty years of research, yielding dozens of books and articles. From the very first steps he took as a researcher, Hourani was preoccupied with the definition and components of nationalism. He defined nationalism as the existence of a feeling between persons – an awareness of the existence of common elements such as language, history (true or imagined or selective[80]), culture and conduct – as a wish to act in concert, to create a community, to sense collective responsibility and sacrifice for attainment of the goal. According to Hourani, these are the elements comprising consciousness of nationalism and the wish to act on its behalf or in its name.

Hourani regarded political nationalism as the state expression of nationalism, or action to achieve statehood. In his view, Arab nationalism was the response to Western intrusion and the dangers it posed to the Arab world and Islam. It was an effort to defend the existence of the Arab collective, to fend off self-abasement, to gain control of the Westernization process and apply it in accordance with principles to which Arabs adhere.[81] This was the period of the late nineteenth century, before nationalism flourished among the Arabs – the reference is to nationalism of a European hue, embracing concepts such as a nation's need to control its destiny (i.e. independence). Citizens of a state possess the right and prerogative to be ruled by governments of their choice. (Previously, Arab nationalists' demands of the Ottoman regime did not extend beyond urging an amelioration of their status within the Empire. The Arab demand for secession was only voiced in the Empire's final decades.)

As noted, these sentiments only arose among Arabs when they perceived Western penetration as a threat to their essential values and their creed. Accordingly, the aim of Arab nationalism was to remove such threats. Various nationalist trends thus encouraged the Arabs to awareness of the need to preserve, employ and protect their joint heritage, religion and language, their customs and memories.[82] When the nationalists grasped the true and menacing potency of Western penetration, they realized that only through unity, joining forces and overcoming differences, would they succeed in defending themselves and their nationalism. Accordingly, this stage featured a general Arab nationalism rather than the specific nationalisms of single countries or of this or that sector of the Arab world.

That nationalism in this way addressed those matters common to all, or most, Arabs, such as one language, shared cultural and historical heritage (residues of cultures, traditions and customs stemming from the Arabian peninsula can be detected throughout the Arab world) and a single religion embracing all the believers in Islam, and consequently generating the umma, the nation of Islam. With Arab nationalism seeming inseparably intertwined with the Islamic creed, preservation of Islam was consequently seen as an objective of the Arab nationalist movement (few Arabs or Muslims would emulate Atatürk in drawing a line between state and nationalism on one hand, and religion on the other).[83]

Arab nationalists thus pursued Arab unity, but soon realized that it must be attained in stages. Whenever the campaign to implement nationalism triumphed in any of the Arab countries, it would constitute a staging post on the path to national unity throughout the Arab world. The emergence of separate nationalist movements in the various Arab countries was due to the fact that each Arab country faced different problems in relation to its European rulers. An Arab state that gained its independence and gave form to its nationalism, would help those still struggling for self-determination (this was the reasoning behind the aid the Arab states extended to the Palestinians).[84]

Arab nationalists set themselves a number of objectives, prompted by their encounter with the West, its culture and potency. The initial reaction was preservation and enrichment of the Arab heritage. In time, there were growing demands for equality with the West, the formula adopted calling for espousing Western ideas and commodities, but without self-abasement, or a break with the past and the Arab heritage.[85] The Arabs were swift to pick up the notions of European nationalism, such as the demand for control of their own fate as well as the attempt to reorganize the social and economic structure of their communities, which they attempted to achieve by means of controlled and selective ingestion of Western ideas, methods and organization. The entire Arab world shared these demands for reform, claimed Hourani, even if not all were clear on how to go about achieving these reforms, or whether that would be the ultimate form of Arab nationalism.

Thus, the fundamental component Hourani pinpointed in Arab nationalism was the notion – the sense prevalent among the people of the Arab world – that they had to organize their lives in a manner

unlike that of the past. If the principle formerly guiding men in their actions had come from on high, i.e., religion, the key to the new structure was to be human thought.[86] The idea of drawing a line between Islamic universalism (the umma) and a general Arab nationalism – or, subsequently, a narrower (Egyptian, Iraqi, etc.) nationalism – was revolutionary (Islam had never acknowledged the division of its adherents into nations).[87] But some questioned whether human thought expresses the wish of the individual, that is, in relation to himself, and whether therein lies the structure of nationalism. Hourani quotes Sati al-Husri, of Aleppo in Syria, who served as education minister while Syria was under French mandate. According to al-Husri, nationalism does not depend upon human wishes, as British and French thinkers maintain. To him, a nation is an existing, objective entity, a fact of reality, independent of man or his thoughts. One is either Arab or not, it did not depend upon one's desires. Language is the basis of the nation, not the wishes of individuals. Hence, the Arab nation comprises no less, but equally, no more, than those who speak the Arabic language.[88]

But however Arab nationalists attempted to organize their own lives and their nation's affairs without reference to religion, and resting solely upon desires or thoughts, Arab nationalism ran into obstacles in its attempt to draw a distinction between nationalism and Islam. Islam, wrote Hourani, was what the Arabs had achieved in history; to a large degree, Islam had created them and moulded them, granting them unity, jurisprudence, culture. And so, while relying upon a non-religious system to chart its course, Arab nationalism discovered that this secular apparatus had no special attraction for Arab sentiment. Islam thus remained the common basis of Arab feeling and the Arab nation, even if the latter comprised non-Muslims as an integral portion.[89]

What forms of nationalism are to be found in the Middle East? Hourani distinguished three principal types, of which religious nationalism – albeit not the region's most long-standing form of nationalism – was the clearest. All those adhering to the same religion comprised a distinct political community. People were classified by religious faith, and it was so when the Roman Empire was Christianized. We therefore perceive a shared religious heritage that unites persons belonging to a specific religious group (Muslims, Christians, Jews). As recently as the first quarter of the twentieth

century, when the League of Nations conducted an exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece (1920–22), the sole criterion of affiliation was religious: anyone of the Orthodox faith was considered Greek, even if his or her culture or mother-tongue were not Greek. Conversely, anyone of the Muslim persuasion was considered Turkish; again, language made no difference.[90]

A second, less prevalent type of Middle Eastern nationalism was territorial patriotism. In other words, a sense of community, and of love, shared by those who entertained those sentiments towards a specific tract of territory. This feeling came into being when a community maintained an organized existence over a period of time in the selfsame region; that region had relatively clear-cut boundaries (few Middle Eastern boundaries are clearly-defined, except in locations like Mount Lebanon or Egypt); and the community had an unbroken tradition of separate administrative or political existence. As noted, it was so in Egypt, where nationalists made frequent attempts to imbue the population with patriotic memories of the country, its inhabitants, and the organized, distinct existence its people had enjoyed in the past. In other words, whenever a region like Egypt was gobbled up by a power broader and stronger (the Ottoman Empire, the British Empire), those memories of the past welled up to revive the sense of nationalism and patriotism among its people.[91]

A third type of Middle Eastern nationalism is the national and ethnic identity of speakers of the same language. As is well-known, this type preceded Islam, and its primordiality is of considerable significance. Those who speak the same language constitute a single nation, and are consequently entitled to an independent political unit. In Hourani's view, this became the predominant political idea in the Middle East, shunting aside or engulfing other elements. Arabic-speakers constituted a single nation, in spite of internal differences and rifts, and even if that nation could encompass diverse states. This notion certainly gained redoubled validity when underpinned – or overshadowed – by a further important component: the Muslim religion.[92]

What are the sources upon which Arab nationalism drew, and the models it attempted to apply? We have already stated that secular liberal notions from Europe exercised a fascination for Arab nationalists, particularly those who spoke of self-determination, and organization of government and society for the benefit of the citizenry.

A second source was Islamic reformism, i.e., an attempt to adapt that creed to changing times and sundry European principles. In practice, the reforms effected by Arab nationalism were confined to the attempt to achieve national independence. Only subsequently was there scope for personal freedom. Liberation of the economy from foreign control, for example, created an opening for national and private initiatives. Attainment of independence, membership of the League of Nations (or, later, of the United Nations), i. e., achieving equal status with the West, at least ostensibly and at least within those state and international structures then in existence, were the objectives of Arab nationalism.

But independence did not imply total separation from the previous imperialist formation. Tight links with Britain and France did not permit of overnight dissociation. The ambition was to draw the empires into a different relationship, of equality with adoption of European values, not of separation. Even the erstwhile subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the Palestinians included, were willing at the time to settle for less than total separation. Their goal was to modify the Ottoman attitude towards them, after the manner of the equality – not separation – that Arab peoples demanded of France and Britain in the twentieth century.[93]

How did Hourani gauge the potency of the national ideal in the Arab world, and where did he see room for improvement? Nationalism gained redoubled validity in the Arab world through the enfeeblement of the Ottoman Empire, and particularly, its disappearance after the First World War.[94] The encounter with the West now became close indeed, as Britain and France took over the Middle East. Early fruits of that encounter were disillusionment and frustration, for the Arab nationalists had hoped for independence; but in place of the Ottoman Empire, they received a new form of imperialism – British and French.[95] This gave rise to an ever-growing process extending over a hundred years, although we encounter its fiercest expression in the twentieth century: opposition to British rule in Egypt, Persian opposition to Russian influence, growing differences between Young Turks and Arabs, the rise of the Turkish Republic, liberation from the mandates and imperial rule of France and Britain in the Middle East and North Africa, and, of course, the Palestinian–Zionist conflict. All these manifestations exhibited a common denominator: the Arab encounter with Europe and the West.

Arab nationalists were struck with the national unity of the

European states, regarding it as the key to their success.[96] Conversely, Hourani blamed the failure of Arab nationalism, most notably its debacle in Palestine, on the absence of unity, and the absence of an Arab nation in the true sense of the term. The grounds for that setback seemed to be rooted in a static, primitive mentality, disunity, lack of progress, an inadequate secularism. Only when those deficiencies were filled would Arab nationalism manage to overcome Zionism. In other words, Hourani regarded nationalism – implying unity, progress and secularism – as the remedy for Arab ills.[97]

The encounter between Arabs and the West also touched upon Zionism. The two national movements – Arab and Zionist – appeared approximately at the same time, both stemming from oppression – the Jews suffered in Russia, the Arabs under the Ottoman, British and French empires. It was not long before both movements became disillusioned with the West: Arab national frustrations over the non-fulfilment of expectations after the First World War, and later the Zionist disappointment in Britain. There were thus great similarities between the two nationalist movements.[98] How did Arab nationalism perceive its connection with the West and Zionism?

In the Arab Office material submitted to the AAC – of which, as noted, Hourani was one of the authors – Zionism is portrayed as an obstacle on the Arab nation's course towards better relations with the West, and understanding based upon mutual respect and equality. Zionism is described as part of the Western world, and supported by the Western Powers: Zionism was to blame for the alienation blighting relations between the Arab world and the West. The Arab world also rejected Zionism's claim to serve as its bridge and mediator with the West: the Arabs had been in contact with the West for a hundred years, with no call for Zionist help in forging that connection. If Zionism had any effect upon relations between the Arabs and the West, it was precisely in a negative slant.[99] Further, Hourani depicted the Arabs' view of Zionism as resembling their perception of the Western traits they detested – arrogance, lack of respect for Arab tradition, intrusion into the very heart of the Arab nation. (For their part, the Zionists were bound to detect – within Arab opposition to Zionism – the traits of European anti-Semitism).[100] Here too, belongs Hourani's view, already given above, that the Arab world faced a parting of the ways – between opposition to the West, adopting from it only those means and weapons that could enhance its ability to defend

itself against the West, or collaboration with the West, ingesting (not copying) its ideas and methods, and resorting to Western assistance in building a more progressive society. The course it would choose at this cross-roads depended on the West's attitude towards the Arab world and Islam. That attitude also included the Western position in relation to Zionism.[101]

Hourani also disputed the benefit the Arabs might allegedly gain from the presence in their midst of a Western population. On the contrary, Zionism, admittedly a Western incursion, simultaneously was a back turned upon Europe.[102] The Arabs consequently regarded it as a harmful Western intrusion. Their attitude towards the West was thus largely coloured by the attitude of the West towards Zionism. Their opposition to Zionism was, in effect, opposition to the West.

What deductions can be drawn from this about the Arab world's perception of the West? Already in his earliest writings (1946) Hourani pinpointed the feelings of resentment the East–West encounter elicited in the Arab world: there was the attitude of obvious disdain in the sense of superiority the Europeans displayed towards the Arabs. The remedy that the Arab world hoped to find for this state of affairs, beyond the conviction that it was not inferior to the West, was also the urge to resemble the West, to oblige it to acknowledge Arabs as equals, to foster the Arab nation-state with an emphasis on prosperity and abundance for individual and community, just like the West.[103] As we have already noted, such disdain was doubly insulting when enfolded within romantic admiration for the exotic, the folklorish, the primitive.

The response of the West to the Arab nationalism following its encounter and its confrontations with the Arab world was equally hard for the Arabs to accept. We have already noted the artificial, non-authentic nature attributed to Palestinian opposition to Zionism, and the assumption that it could be tempered if economic and social differences were eliminated. This view also stemmed from a wider (and more long-standing) outlook prevalent in the West to Arab nationalism. This was not genuine, it was claimed. It was merely wealthy rulers whipping up the impoverished, disadvantaged majority against foreigners. In other words, once a remedy for the internal crisis within the Arab world was found, the social and political tensions that prompted Arab opposition to the West would disappear. Even when Britain and France came around to a more realistic view of

Arab nationalism and Arab opposition to the West, they persisted in their refusal to recognize these sentiments as local phenomena, seeing them as sustained and aroused by external factors and alien ideologies (Bolshevism, Fascism, etc).[104]

Western intrusion, however dire the threat it posed to traditional forms and structures of Arab society, also aided the Arabs in diagnosing flaws and injustices admittedly existing in their midst. This gave renewed impetus to their rectification: the desire to correct injustice was equalled by the wish to achieve Western standards, whereby the Arabs would become the equals of the West. The West, Europe in particular, thus set the models for the Arab nationalist movements: resting upon principles adopted from the West, the Arab world now submitted its demands to the West; the West was perceived as deceitful, but it had also created the instruments for removal of the threat it posed. The Arabs' pleas and struggles for independence – and their ultimate attainment of that goal – made the Arab nation-state acceptable in Europe, thereby setting it on an equal footing with European states. Equally, the urge towards reform and modernism, acquired, as we have noted, through observation of Europe, led to the creation in the Arab world of social and political activity resembling that in Europe and the West.[105] Hourani penned copious descriptions of the changes that came to pass in the Arab world and which he associated – implicitly – with Western influence upon the Arab world: the transition of power and control from the deserts to the agricultural areas, from the heartland to the Mediterranean coast, from the village to the educated classes.[106] The leading monarchies either disappeared, or changed beyond recognition. The traditional past practically failed to survive; the colonial past was dead and buried. A new society was emerging, with industrialization, organized agriculture and government involvement in industry and farming. On the rise was a middle class of entrepreneurs, traders and managers, of intellectuals, technicians, clerks, officers, professionals and experts. Also on the rise was an urban proletariat organized in labour unions. Conversely, the rural landowners, and the European/Levantine bourgeoisie in the cities were in decline. Improved communications, the emancipation of women, a growing esteem for literature and the arts (with the past no longer the sole criterion of inspiration) and education – all these, too, were marks of change in Arab society. Likewise, propagation of the cinema and the communications media – printed and electronic –

and particularly, the role of radio in the crucial years between the 1930s and 1960s.[107] Religious codes were replaced by secular counterparts (in conjunction with efforts to modernize Islam) such as a ban on polygamy and even the institution of secular marriages (Turkey, Tunisia). Well-being throughout the Arab world was now defined as cultural development, rising living standards, provision of social services. The regard is to the future, Hourani concluded; no more mosques and sphinxes and monarchs on the postal stamps of Arab countries; instead, workers and peasants in heroic poses, brandishing clenched fists. The people were speaking out, and pressing for change.[108]

In Hourani's view, there was no value to relations between the Arabs and the West unless the latter acknowledged the changes the Arab world had undergone and abandoned its persistent designation of developments in the Arab world in terms like 'ignorance' and 'stagnation'. In 1946, he portrayed the contacts between Britain and the Arab world as superficial, i.e., failing to take account of the changes we have mentioned. The following description, not without its humour (a further side to Hourani's character) may still hold for our own day:

> British propagandists are sometimes in the habit of suggesting that they have simply dropped into the Arab world for the week-end, out of good nature, to see how things are going and to give a helping hand (a process less enjoyable for the host than the guest). This is ludicrous and deceives nobody, but sometimes leads foreigners to regard the British as hypocrites.[109]

VII

Before summarising this article, I want to dwell briefly upon that portion of Hourani's written testimony to the AAC where he relates to the sufferings of the Jewish people. In his testimony, Hourani (having characterized the Jewish 'mission' to the world as the factor setting them apart from non-Jews and consequently generating alienation bordering upon hostility towards the Jews) turns to an explanation of the countries where Jews have not been repressed or annihilated, where prevailing conditions made for ameliorated relations between Jews and their environment: democracy, heterogeneity from the outset, and the Jews' abandonment of their

intense attachment to their religion and their 'continuing mission'. Conversely, Hourani points to the perplexed attitude towards Jews in homogenous nation-states whose demand for absolute loyalty was impossible for all Jews to meet. Moreover, even Jews who bowed to the demand were not always welcomed as full members of those nations.[111]

Hourani also points to a series of changes in Western society and culture which made hostility towards the Jews diminish or even disappear. As he put it, it is harder now than formerly to sense instinctive hostility towards those who do not share your truths and beliefs. Hatred of the Jews was no longer acceptable; even if one did not like them, one treated them as equals, in accordance with the liberal, democratic and humanitarian principles of Western political thinking. These changes had also made it possible for the Jews to fully assimilate into the world around them, without demands for religious conversion or surrender of whatever distinguished them from their surroundings.

What nevertheless came to pass in Europe (part of which, ostensibly, was democratic and liberal) that led to the massacre of the Jews? First, there were social and class changes in Central and Eastern Europe. The Jews, members of an urban middle class, confronted a rival middle class. The rise of that rival class had occurred in the thirty years from 1900 into the 1930 partly falling into the period of the great economic crisis in the West. Also contributing to violent anti-Semitism were the decay of the multi-national empires, the cult of strength, the obeisance to irrationality, of which Hitler was a symptom (the sickness of the European soul, in Hourani's terms). Two forces clashed: the Jews becoming obsessive in their insistence on conducting themselves and living as Jews; and the non-Jewish world, strangely and abnormally aware of the difference between itself and the Jews. The outcome: political and social discrimination of the Jews.

What solutions were proffered for this unhappy state of affairs? The Zionist solution, as analysed by Hourani, argued that the abnormal relationship between Jews and their surroundings had but one single cause: the Jews' lack of a homeland, a country of their own. Were they to become a nation like any other, in Palestine the Jewish problem would vanish. Hourani questions whether the establishment of a Jewish state anywhere would indeed reduce the distinctness of the Jews and make them a nation like all other nations. It will be recalled that

Hourani's previous analysis attributed the anomaly of the Jewish situation to the sense of mission they harbour, and the mentality this inspired in them. Accordingly, wherever Jews concentrated, in a state of their own – in Palestine, as Zionism proposed – that same mentality would prevail, possibly even more pronounced and sharp.[112] For the Jewish sense of mission and exclusivity was at its lowest wherever Jews were granted equality with their surroundings. Conversely, that feeling peaked in places where Jews were socially isolated (ghettoes). It was therefore not to be expected that the inhabitants of a distinctly Jewish state would forfeit the uniquely Jewish traits that had given rise to the Jewish problem. Only someone arguing that the Jewish problem stemmed from their savage surroundings could believe that removing the Jews from their environment and concentrating them in a state of their own would solve their problem. But Hourani did not believe that this would come about: the Jewish state would not bring about the disappearance of that sense of mission which lies at the root of their problem. The religious mission would indeed disappear, but it would be replaced in a Jewish state by a racial or national mentality that claimed it to be politically and economically pure. This would give rise to an abnormal relationship between the Jewish state and the other peoples of the world. The influence of the past could not be removed by a mere change of place; hence, according to Hourani, there was no certainty at all that the Jews would shake off their abnormality. For the Jews would bring into their state all the traits they had acquired in their 'dispersion', and it would take generations before they could rid themselves of those traits.[112]

In fact, Hourani argued, anti-Semitism would increase. The issue of dual loyalty would arise among the Jews residing outside the Zionist state; would they be loyal to the state of their residence or the Jewish state? And with attacks on Jews on the increase, there was no certainty that the Jewish state would be able to aid those Jews outside its borders. It could be expected, claimed Hourani, that, relative to other states around the world, the Jewish state would be weak and third-rate, its diplomatic prowess irrelevant in the face of stronger states. Everyone would lose from the establishment of a Jewish state, claimed Hourani:

> They [the Jews] would lose their international culture, their sensitiveness and understanding; they would lose also their sense of mission and with it that urge to create and reform which has

> helped, these last hundreds of years, to fertilise the genius of Europe.[113]

Hourani went on to portray the hostile and violent relationship that would prevail between the Jewish state, should it arise in Palestine, and the Arab minority within and its Arab neighbours. The Jewish state would be obliged to expand at the expense of its neighbours, whether because of population growth or because of its need to create markets in its neighbours' territories. Would Jews be safer in this state of theirs than in their European Diaspora?

What solution did Hourani put forward? If the problem of the Jews lay in the stubbornly obsessive conviction peculiar to them that they were a special people, set apart from other nations so as to fulfil their mission in the world, then the removal of that conviction would remove the obstacle to integration of the Jews into their environment.

> If the Jews should lose their feeling, then there would be no obstacle to their assimilation; the Jews would disappear and with them their problem of establishing normal relations with the rest of the world. So long, however, as they retain their sense of difference and of mission, so long will there continue to be a tension between them and their neighbours, a tension which is always likely to cause difficulties to Jewish individuals as well as to Jewish communities, and which may, given certain political or economic conditions, lead to more or less severe persecution. In these circumstances assimilation is still possible for individuals, but not for the Jewish people as a whole.[114]

With the assistance of democracy, public opinion, constitutional and international safeguards, it would be possible to let the Jews remain in Europe. Homogenous nationalism too would have to change: it must adapt to living with sectors, with variety and sundry differences. The strength of a state does not depend upon its homogeneity, argued Hourani: loyalty, a desire to work together, communal, local and personal variety are its most important elements.

In the first portion of his written testimony, where he deals with the roots of the Jewish problem, Hourani falls back upon Jacques Maritain, the French Catholic philosopher, thinker and theologist.[115] Maritain's articles mentioned here – all published prior to in 1946 – may well have been before Hourani as he composed his written testimony for the AAC.[116]

Maritain is found to remark that, if the world did not like the Jews, that was because it felt that they had always been outsiders, different from their surroundings. The world also did not take well to the Jews' passion for the absolute, and the 'unbearable stimulus' to which the absolute subjects them. The result is that what the Jews are being denied is, simply, the right to live and exist.[117]

Those who detested Jews may have their reasons: the Jews' self-esteem provokes hostility; likewise, their artistic gift for success; not to mention their loud wailing over the sufferings inflicted upon them.[118] Numerous 'faults' are attributed to the Jews, particularly their success, for '[t]hey do not know how to make people forgive them for their success.'[119] Jews' success in a number of professions did not win them the affections of those people who were eager for but never attained achievement.

But Maritain had no immediate solution for the problems of the Jews. His grounds are theological: the Jews are in this world to fulfil a divine mission. Therefore, he was opposed to their assimilation into their non-Jewish surroundings; he also opposed the establishment of a Zionist state that would make them resemble the other nations of the world. He was against erasion of differences between Jews and their environment: 'Jews who become like others become worse than others.'[120] No Jews had ever become as assimilated as the Jews of Germany. They had become entirely German, writes Maritain, which did not make them more 'discreet' or 'humble'.[121] So, too, the conflicts and tensions between Jews and their surroundings would never disappear: the tragedy of the Jews, wrote Maritain, is the tragedy of humanity, and that was the reason why there is no solution for the Jewish problem. It is the tragedy of man and his struggle with the world, and of the world's struggle with God. It was not to be expected that those conflicts and tensions would disappear, certainly not before fulfilment of the prophecies of the disciples and prophets.[122] 'To be hated by the world is their glory. It is the vocation of Israel that the world execrates.'[123] As for events in Palestine, Maritain significantly maintained that the Jews there were suffering from unjustifiable violence – there, as elsewhere, sympathies should lie primarily with the victims, not the aggressors.[124]

VIII Summary

When judged against the recommendations the AAC included in its report, Hourani's testimony was a resounding failure. The committee's principal findings and recommendations were the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish DPs into Palestine, since no other country was able to absorb the them (the committee added that it opposed Jewish immigration into Palestine for the purpose of creating a Jewish majority there; but it also stated its opposition to making that immigration contingent upon the consent of Palestine's Arab majority); abolition of the restrictions in force in Palestine on sale of land to Jews; that 'once and for all' the country would be neither Jewish nor Arab but the Holy Land and no religion or race could claim the country as its own; that the Christian interest – likewise 'once and for all' – must not be prejudiced by Muslim–Jewish squabbles over the Holy Land; and that an extensive effort, economic, social and financial, should be made to reduce if not close the gaps existing in Palestine to the detriment of the Arab sector.[125] They bear no trace of any impact Hourani's testimony may have had, except perhaps for the committee's affirmation that no Jewish state would be established in Palestine. Azzam Pasha, Secretary-General of the Arab League, responded to the committee's findings stating: 'if ten extreme Zionists had got together in a New York room, they could not have devised anything more to the advantage of the Zionists.'[126]

The explanations given to the AAC's various positions, more precisely the way it reacted to the painful realities its members encountered in the DP camps and their tours of the Middle East, were featured above. Here it may be appropriate to add that, given the composition of the committee, its terms of reference and the images it evolved and adopted in the course of its inquiry, one could hardly have expected findings and recommendations in any way different from the ones listed.

Hourani likewise could probably not have expressed anything but the things he said and wrote. We have already mentioned Richard Crossman's impression that, as a British subject who had worked for the British government during the Second World War, Hourani could not have spoken other than he did, lest he be denounced as a British agent. It is equally clear that the public and judicial form of inquiry by the AAC ensured that it would be presented with nothing but maximalist and absolutely uncompromising testimony. Also important

is the fact that Hourani did not enjoy his two years (1945–47) in the service of Arab politics, and that probably also goes for his testimony to the AAC in 1946. He may have been willing to support the partition of Palestine, as he stated forty years later, but the AAC's public inquiry and its mode of operation prevented him from doing so. Note his impressions of two years in Arab politics:

> I am not adapted to political propaganda, the endless repetition and the endless suppression of things which are inconvenient to talk about. You cannot state what is on your mind. And I found this impossible, so I left. Also, by that time I was rather out of sympathy not in the sense that I did not believe in the cause of the Palestinian Arabs, but I had gradually and reluctantly came to believe that by asking for too much they were going to get nothing and that *some kind of a partition was the only solution.* I couldn't take the official line that there must be an Arab state in the whole of Palestine, because obviously there wasn't going to be one. So the best thing was to withdraw.[127]

Would the history of Palestine have been different had the AAC permitted the sides to voice their views in private? Possibly the committee might have found agreement on both sides, or that leading elements in each party were prepared to partition the country.

On the other hand, Hourani's testimony was the most impressive on behalf of the Arab side, and for in its profundity, content and style was compared with that of Dr Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, a person of international prestige, then in his seventies, while Hourani, as we recall, was in his early thirties and as yet unknown in wider circles.

Indeed, there was much in common between the testimonies of Hourani and Weizmann. Not only did both men have considerable British education or experience, but they were familiar, too, with the complex realities in Palestine. Neither entirely dismissed the justice of the arguments proposed by the opposing side, and both acknowledged that a decision in favour of the side they represented would simultaneously come as a harsh and painful blow to the other side. Both were granted the full time they requested of the AAC for delivery of their testimony, the committee even extending the time of the questions it directed at them (contrasting with the impatience it exhibited towards numerous other witnesses).[128] Unlike Shuqayri, Hourani was not 'bellicose', nor did he indulge in the verbal sleight of

hand displayed by David Ben Gurion, one of the heads of the Jewish Agency.[129] Finally, Major Reginald Manningham-Buller (Lord Dilhorne), one of the committee's British members, was impressed by three witnesses, adding that such was the general impression of the AAC: Albert Einstein (who had appeared before the committee during its Washington hearings), Chaim Weizmann, and Albert Hourani.[130]

I would like to conclude with the advice Hourani gave to 'Dear John' in 1944:

> Try not to develop an opinion about the Arabs until you haveknown them for a long time. It is very easy, in dealing with a foreign people, and especially one so unlike your own, to give up the attempt to understand them after a time, and to erect temporary conclusions you have reached into permanent dogmas, which may themselves after a time become no more than a form of words to be recited whenever the subject is raised. In the last seven years I seem to have met an unusually large number of people who settled themselves comfortably in armchairs and made long speeches beginning 'In my humble opinion what the Arabs need is ... .' I dare not think how many authorities on the Middle East there will be after this war; please do not add to their number until you are certain that you have seen more than the facade of Arab civilization.[13]

Notes

1. Albert Hourani, representing the Arab Office, to the AAC, Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946.

2. Ahmed Shuqayri, representing the Arab Office, to the AAC, Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946.

3. Sir Walter Smart to Azzam Pasha, Secretary General of the Arab League, Cairo, 24 September 1945, PRO, FO371/45240/E7145.

4. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 23 March 1946. For geographical Syria, the necessity of unifying its component lands, the subsequent creation of a Syrian–Iraqi federation and its links with the other Arab states, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, (Oxford, 1970), pp. 293–4.

5. Leila Fawaz, 'In Memoriam: Albert Hourani (1915–1993)', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (1993), pp. i–iv.

6. A. H. Hourani, *Is Zionism the Solution of the Jewish Problem*? London, The Arab Office, Pamphlets on Arab Affairs – No. 2, June 1946, submitted to the AAC, March 1946. The distinctness of the Jews, the grounds for their

persecution and their unavailing attempts at assimilation, are briefly mentioned in Albert Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – II', *International Affairs* 29/2 (April 1953), pp. 158–9. Furthermore, that Hourani recognized the impact Judaism has had on Christianity and Islam and that he amply admired Jewish scholarship will be clear to anyone familiar with his works.

7. Ibid., p. 3.

8. Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), French philosopher and theologist; see further below.

9. Hourani, *Is Zionism the Solution of the Jewish Problem*?, p. 4.

10. Ibid., p. 4.

11. Letter from President Truman to General Eisenhower, Transmitting report of Earl G. Harrison, 31 August 1945, Department of State Bulletin, 29 September 1945, XIII, 327.

12. A view voiced within Bevin's immediate circle held that the invitation to the United States to take part in the AAC would rebound into a Soviet demand for a say in the Palestine conflict. But the United States did not share Bevin's apprehensions about the Soviet Union. On the contrary: Washington regarded the Middle East as a region where its shared interests with Moscow outweighed the differences between them. Cf. Amikam Nachmani, *Great Power Discord in Palestine: The Anglo–American Committee of Inquiry into the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine 1945–46* (London, 1987), passim.

13. Omar Dejany to the AAC, Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946.

14. The disagreement among the Zionists, between those eager to present a maximalist position and the more conciliatory elements favouring partition, with threats made against any member of the Zionist camp daring to break ranks with the official Jewish Agency demand for a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine, led to the public position being maximalist, in contrast with the support for partition voiced in private talks. But as noted, this was not a committee made for striking deals of that nature. Report of the Anglo–American Committee of Enquiry Regarding the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine, Lausanne, 20 April 1946, London, His Majesty's Stationary Office, Cmd. 6808, p. 26.

15. Richard Crossman, *Palestine Mission: A Personal Record* (New York and London, 1947), pp. 124–5. When the Second World War broke out Albert Hourani became a researcher at the Royal Institute of *International Affairs*. Between 1943 and 1945, he was employed as an analyst at the office of the British Minister of State resident in Cairo.

16. AAC Report, p. 2.

17. Hutcheson to Hourani, AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946.

18. Hutcheson to the AAC, Lausanne, 1 April 1946, in Frank W. Buxton to Judge Felix Frankfurter, 1 April 1946, Washington, Library of Congress, Frankfurter Papers, container 40. Buxton was one of the six American

members of the AAC. The committee convened at Lausanne to draw up the report of its inquiry.

19. AAC Report, p. 3.

20. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946.

21. Joseph C. Hutcheson, Jr., 'The Judgement Intuitive: The Function of the "Hunch" in Judicial Decision', *Cornell Law Quarterly* 14/3 (April 1929), p. 278.

22. Nachmani, *Great Power Discord*, p. 71.

23. In the New Testament rendering: 'Then Agrippa said to Paul: "You almost persuade me to become a Christian"' (Acts, 26:28, New King James version).

24. Hutcheson may have referred to Samuel Houston (1793–1863), who liberated Texas from Mexico and became its governor, president and its US senator (1846–1859). Houston declined to support the Confederacy during the American Civil War, in the course of which he was forced from his office as state governor. The Texan city of Houston is named after him. For further details, see: The Reader's Digest, *Family Encylopedia of American History* (New York, 1975), pp. 526–7.

25. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946. For Weizmann's testimony, see: Nachmani, Great Power Discord, pp. 164–5.

26. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 13 March 1946.

27. Hutcheson Lecture to the Bar Association of Houston, Texas, 3 May 1946, Truman Library, Truman Papers, 204 Misc., Box 772.

28. Frank Buxton to Felix Frankfurter, 4 April 1946, Washington, Library of Congress, Frankfurter Papers, Container 40.

29. Frank Aydelotte, American member of the AAC, Diary, 11 April 1946, Swathmore College, Pennsylvania, Aydelotte Papers.

30. Richard Crossman to the Royal Institute of *International Affairs* (RIIA), London, 13 June 1946, St Antony's College, Oxford, Middle East Centre, Crossman Papers.

31. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946. See also Albert Hourani, AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946. See also Albert Hourani, *A Vision of History. Near Eastern and other Essays* (Beirut, 1961), p. 104: *Race, Religion and Nation-State in the Near East.* From national existence to national aggrandizement is not a necessary path to take, but it is an easy one; and it can scarcely be avoided if the nation sets itself up as the final object of worship A nation-state can be healthy only if its citizens are conscious of some loyalty beyond that to the State.

32. The Arab Office, *The Future of Palestine* (London, August 1947), pp. 70–7.

33. A. H. Hourani, *Great Britain and the Arab World* (London, 1946).

34. Ibid., p. 9.

35. The Arab Office, *The Problem of Palestine*, London, *Arab Office Pamphlets on Arab Affairs – No. 3*, 1946 (Memorandum presented to the AAC by the Arab Office, Jerusalem, March 1946), pp. 1–2, 6; Hourani, *Arabic*

Thought in the Liberal Age, pp. 292–3. Hourani was among the authors of the memorandum the Arab Office submitted to the AAC.

36. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, (London 1943). For Hourani's impressions of Hitti's visits to his father's home, and Hitti's writings, see Albert Hourani, 'Patterns of the Past' in Thomas Naff (ed.), *Paths to the Middle East. Ten Scholars Look Back*, (Albany, 1993), p. 30; Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with Leading Middle East Historians* (Reading, 1994), pp. 22–3.

37. AAC Washington Public Hearings, 11 January 1946. Hitti gave evidence on behalf of the Institute of Arab–American Affairs. See also Frances Blanshard, *Frank Aydelotte of Swarthmore* (Connecticut, 1970), p. 349.

38. The Arab Higher Committee, founded in April 1936, was the body that led the Palestinian uprising against the British, until its dispersal by the British, the arrest of its members, several of whom were deported. In advance of Palestine Arab testimony before the AAC, the Arab Higher Committee was reconstituted, its exiled members readmitted into Palestine and others released from prison.

39. Lt. General D'Arcy, General Officer Commanding British Troops in Palestine (GOC Palestine), to the AAC, Jerusalem, 14 March 1946, Washington, US National Archives (USNA), Record Group (RG) 43, AAC, Box 11, p. 30.

40. Alan Cunningham, British High Commissioner, Palestine, commenting on the AAC Report, May 1946, Oxford, St. Antony's College, Middle East Centre, Cunningham Papers, Box 5, File 2.

41. Manuscript of Lord Killearn Diaries, 4 December 1945, Oxford, St. Antony's College, Middle East Centre.

42. Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 358.

43. 'The peasants oppose Zionism, insofar as they do oppose it, because in their ignorance they have been duped by the landowners, or else because the bitterness and despair born of their poverty must find some outlet.' The Arab Office, London, Arab News Bulletin, no 15, 28 June 1946, p. 1.

44. Evan Wilson, *Decision on Palestine: How the U.S. Came to Recognize Israel* (Stanford, 1979), p. 75; Crossman to RIIA, London, 13 June 1946, p. 5. Oxford, St. Antony's College, Middle East Centre, Crossman Papers.

45. Arab Office, *The Problem of Palestine*, p. 13.

46. AAC Report, p. 5.

47. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 12 March 1946.

48. Hourani attributed Husayni's fatalism to his preoccupation with yoga during his exile in Rhodesia. Interview with Hourani, Oxford, November 1979.

49. William Yale, Counsellor, US State Department, 'Impressions on Palestine,' 1 April 1946, Harvard University Houghton Library, Yale Press.

50. 3rd Infantry Division, Weekly Intelligence Review, no. 12, 10–17, March 1946, PRO, WO169/22967.

51. Interview with Hourani, Oxford, November 1979. According to Hourani, the audience at the AAC hearings in Jerusalem largely consisted of Christian Arabs.

52. Crossman to Hector McNeil (Minister of State at the Foreign Office), Lausanne, 22 April 1946, PRO FO371/52524/E4469.

53. Alan Cunningham to the Colonial Secretary, 2 April 1946, Oxford, St. Antony's College, Middle East Centre, Cunningham Papers, Box 1, file 1. The 'old gang', i.e., the Arab Higher Committee during the riots of the 1930s.

54. Musa al-Alami, who officiated as Palestinian delegate to the Arab League, was a scion of one of the most respected Palestinian families which traced its origins to Jabal Alam in Morocco. A branch of the family settled in Jerusalem in the sixteenth century or even earlier. Family members attained to some of the highest offices that the Ottoman Empire granted to its colonial subjects. Musa's father was mayor of Jerusalem 1906–1909; in 1914, he became a member of the Ottoman parliament, representing Jerusalem. See Albert Hourani, 'Musa 'Alami and the Problem of Palestine, 1933–1949' in Hisham Nashabe (ed), *Studia Palaestina, Studies in Honour of Constantine K. Zurayk* (Beirut, 1988), p. 23.

55. The Arab Office, *The Problem of Palestine*, vol. 1 (pages not numbered). London, by Albert Hourani.

56. After the destruction of the Palestinian community in the years 1948/9, Hourani wrote: ' ... a little thought would have shown that an advanced people would resent its own destruction no less than a backward one.' It was a slip of the pen: Hourani of course meant the opposite, 'the backward ... no less than the advanced'; ibid.; cf. Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – II', p. 165.

57. The Arab Office, *The Problem of Palestine*, vol. 1.

58. A. H. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon. A Political Essay* (London, 1946), p. 100.

59. Hugh Dalton, Minutes of Cabinet Committee on Palestine, 6 September 1945, PRO, CAB95/14.

60 Lecture to the RIIA, London, 13 June 1946, Oxford, St. Antony's College, Middle East Centre, Crossman Papers.

61. James McDonald Diary, 1 April 1946, New York, Columbia University, Lehman Library. James G. McDonald and Frank Buxton were American members of the AAC.

62. Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – II', p. 165.

63. Jewish Agency for Palestine, *The Jewish Case Before the Anglo–American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine as Presented by the Jewish Agency for Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1947), p. 346.

64. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946. In the verbatim minutes of the Public Hearings, Shuqayri's name is spelled Shukayri or Shykayri. Likewise, Harani frequently appears in place of Hourani.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid. In his *The Arab Awakening*, George Antonius argued that the effectiveness of Zionist propaganda had induced the world to regard the Palestine conflict through Zionist eyes; Edward Said's *Orientalism* asserts that one outcome of the expansion of the media throughout the world has been reinforcement of the stereotypes whereby the Orient is perceived and judged. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement*, (Beirut 1938), p. 387; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York 1978), p. 26. For a chapter on Antonius by Hourani, entitled 'The Arab Awakening Forty Years After', see Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (London, 1981).

68. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946. This intriguing exchange between the British Judge Singelton and Ahmad Shuqayri developed after the following testimony:
Singelton: Do you appreciate that the British troops and troops of the Empire did a great deal to free Palestine and other Arab States form the Turks?
Shuqayri: No, if this is a straight answer, it is not liberation but it is separation. ... I say it is separation, and to put the question that we were freed from the Turks implies that we were enslaved by the Turks. Let me assure the Honourable Committee that there was a sort of bi-national government [like that] of Dr. Magnes (see below) ... which was between us and the Turks. We had our future in the Administration. Out of the 70 members in the Ottoman Parliament Palestine sent seven members. I happen to be born of a member of the Turkish Parliament, and fortunately I have the personal illustration to put to the Honourable Committee, that my father, from Acre, was elected a member in the Turkish Parliament, and when he failed my father-in-law was also elected. Now the result of the Mandate in this country and this liberation brings me to the fact that instead of being in Parliament I spent the best days of my youth in concentration camps and in prison (ibid.).

69. Ibid.

70. Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – II', p. 162; The Arab Office, London, *Arab News Bulletin*, no 14, 14 June 1946, p. 7. In this latter publication, the Arab Office considers the proposal to partition Palestine. After concluding his work for the Arab Office in Jerusalem, Hourani served at the Arab Office in London.

71. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Fawaz, 'In Memoriam: Albert Hourani', p. iii.

75. AAC Jerusalem Public Hearings, 25 March 1946.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. H.Q. British Troops, Fortnightly Intelligence Newsletter, No. 11, 17–

30 March 1946, PRO WO169/23021.

80. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, pp. 312–4.

81. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon. A Political Essay*, pp. 1, 97–8.

82. Ibid., pp. 98, 99.

83. Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 186–7; idem, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 341–2; Albert Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – I', *International Affairs* 29/1 (January, 1953), pp. 24–5.

84. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, pp. 293–4.

85. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon. A Political Essay*, p. 101. See also Hourani, *Great Britain and the Arab World*, pp. 18–19.

86. John King, 'Abd El-Kader and Arab Nationalism', in John Spagnolo (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective. Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani* (Oxford, 1992), p. 133.

87. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, pp. 193–4; A. H. Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World* (London, 1946), p. 18.

88. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, pp. 312–4.

89. Ibid., pp. 296–7.

90. Ibid., p. 342; Hourani, *A Vision of History*, p. 87.

91. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, p. 342.

92. Ibid., pp. 342, 343.

93. Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, p. 71; Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, pp. 345–6.

94. Hourani, 'Introduction', in Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury and Mary C. Wilson (eds), *The Modern Middle East: A Reader* (London and New York, 1993), pp. 11–12.

95. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon. A Political Essay*, pp. 104–5.

96. Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, p. 185.

97. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, p. 354.

98. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon. A Political Essay*, p. 106.

99. The Arab Office, *The Problem of Palestine*, pp. 4–5.

100. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon. A Political Essay*, p. 108.

101. Ibid., pp. 1–2.

102. Ibid., pp. 109–10.

103. Ibid., pp. 99–100.

104. Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – 1', pp. 22–3, 38–9.

105. Ibid., p. 36; Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 343–4.

106. Hourani, *Great Britain and the Arab World*, pp. 18–19.

107. On the propagation of communications media (radio and press) throughout the Arab world, see Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 393; Hourani, 'Introduction', in Hourani, Khoury and Wilson (eds), *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, p. 14; Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East – II', p. 168.

108. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, pp. 348–53.

109. Hourani, *Great Britain and the Arab World*, p. 33.
110. Hourani, *Is Zionism the Solution of the Jewish Problem?*, p. 5.
111. Ibid., p. 8.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid., p. 9.
114. Ibid., p. 12.
115. In addition to his citation of Maritain in his essay *Is Zionism the Solution of the Jewish Problem?* p. 4, see also a reference to Maritain in Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World*, pp. 119, 125. Maritain was a former supporter of L'Action Française, the movement founded in France in the late nineteenth century by Charles Maurras. Maritain was taken with the religious, nationalist and monarchical aspects of the movement, which was overtly anti-Semitic. ('From beginning to end anti-Semitism was the essence of the teaching of Maurras', see Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France*, vol. 3: 1871–1962 (London, 1965), pp. 86–90. In the course of the years, Maritain abandoned the movement and its notions in favour of more democratic and humane views.
116. Jacques Maritain, 'The Mystery of Israel', (1937), reprinted in Joseph W. Evans and Leo R. Ward (eds), *The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain. Selected Readings*, (Notre Dame, 1955); Jacques Maritain, *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*, (London, 1939) (reprint, New York, 1973); Jacques Maritain, *Antisemitism* (London, 1939); Jacques Maritain, *Redeeming the Time* (London, 1944).
117. Maritain, *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*, pp. 6, 29–30; idem, *Antisemitism*, p. 4. In his article: 'The Mystery of Israel', p. 208, Maritain refers to the 'unbearable stimulus' as 'the unbearable activation'.
118. Maritain, *Antisemitism*, p. 29.
119. Maritain, 'The Mystery of Israel', p. 207.
120. Ibid., p. 208.
121. Maritain, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 144.
122. Ibid., pp. 131, 147.
123. Maritain, *Antisemitism*, p. 20.
124. Maritain, *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*, p. 66.
125. AAC Report, pp. 1–10. In discussing the immigration of the Jewish DPs, the Arab Office attributed various meanings to the figure 100,000: in its terms, 'mystical', 'hypnotising', and also: 'No Arab can be so simple-minded as to imagine a mere coincidence that President Truman demanded and the Committee recommended the immediate admission to Palestine of exactly the same number of Jewish immigrants. The Arabs know that this is election year in the United States'. See: The Arab Office, London, *Arab News Bulletin*, no 12, 17 May 1946, p. 3; Arab Office, Washington, *Arab News Bulletin*, vol. 1, no 16, 15 July 1946, p. 1.
126. Cairo to Foreign Office, 26 April 1946, PRO, FO371/52520/E4026.
127. Hourani to Nancy Gallagher, in Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with Leading Middle*

East Historians, p. 27 (my italics – A. N.). See also: Hourani, 'Patterns of the Past', in Thomas Naff (ed.), *Paths to the Middle East. Ten Scholars Look Back*, p. 35: 'I did not enjoy the company of politicians and disliked the way in which they thought; I also found it difficult to accept the endless repetitions of political discourse and the necessity to suppress so many nuances of meaning in order to make a point effectively. I closed this chapter of my life with relief and have never re-opened it.'

128. Nachmani, *Great Power Discord in Palestine*, pp. 164–5.

129. For example: Singelton: 'Is the "Hagana" under some sort of control by the Jewish Agency?'
Ben-Gurion: 'There is no organisation of such a kind under the control of the Jewish Agency as far as I know.'
Singelton: 'Have you answered my question?'
Ben-Gurion: 'Yes'.
Singelton: 'The Jewish Agency has nothing to do with the "Hagana"?'
Ben-Gurion: 'No Sir ... The word "Hagana" has a double meaning. The word "Hagana" means defence, but when you use "Hagana" it is a proper name of a secret organisation. With defence we have to do; with an organisation which is called "Hagana", no.'
Singelton: 'I should just like to know where are the headquarters of that organisation (laughter).' Ibid., p. 166.

130. Author's telephone call to Lord Dilhorne, Winter 1978.

131. Hourani, 'Where Shall John Go? Via Syria', *Horizon*, vol. 9, no 54, June 1944, pp. 430–1. During the years 1937–39 Hourani taught at the American University of Beirut. As we already saw, on the outbreak of Second World War he transferred to service with the RIIA and the Foreign Office's research department, subsequently to GHQ Cairo. See Hourani, 'Patterns of the Past', in Naff (ed.), *Paths to the Middle East*, pp. 31–3

5 ❁ The Emergence of Ottoman–Local Elites (1700–1900): A Framework for Research

Ehud R. Toledano

One of Albert Hourani's main contributions to our field is in the area of Arab history in the late Ottoman period (eighteenth–nineteenth centuries).[1] His seminal work on the political behaviour of the urban notables before and during the Tanzimat spawned an impressive corpus of studies on various aspects of elite history in the Middle East mainly, though not exclusively, in the nineteenth century. First delivered in 1966 at a Chicago conference, it was published in 1968 and had a lasting impact on the interpretation of Ottoman–Arab history.

The success of Hourani's approach can be attributed not only to the appeal of his ideas, the grace of his scholarship, and his remarkable mentorship, but also to timing. It was then that Arab nationalist narratives were maturing, and Western scholarship was readily assisting the endeavours of local historians, often providing the training, methods, and historical evidence. Thus Hourani's call, *inter alia*, for the use of local sources in order to unearth local history was enthusiastically welcomed both in the Middle East and in the West.

No more than three years after his Chicago paper, Hourani may have suspected that the approach he had advocated could reinforce the negative attitude towards the Ottoman era that had plagued Arab historiography. In 1969 at the University of Essex he delivered his Carreras Arab Lecture on 'The Ottoman Background of the Arab Middle East'.[2] There he began to reintroduce and relegitimate the Ottoman heritage in the historiography of the Arab Middle East and North Africa. However, overemphasis on local sources (mainly chronicles and *shari'a* court records) and the almost total neglect of central and local Ottoman sources, emphasized the Arab

perspective and in fact belittled, if not outright ignored, the Ottoman background of the modern Middle East. Realizing and deploring these tendencies, Albert Hourani became, over the last decade or so of his life, the most 'Ottomanist' (and pro-Ottoman) of the writers of early modern Arab history.

In the same spirit, the following 'Framework for Research' seeks to go perhaps a step further in restoring the Ottoman chapter in the history of Arab elites to its proper place as a formative and constituent part of the narrative. It is offered in this volume as a tribute to a scholar and a friend, whose work, keen interest, and constant encouragement have contributed a great deal to my own thinking in this area of study and to the shaping of this project-in-progress.

Since this is a report on work currently under way, I do not pretend to present here any definite, final, or overly confident conclusions, but rather to sketch the outline of a forthcoming short book, to survey the main issues and hypotheses, and to provide what is often referred to in the social sciences as 'The Argument'. One of the devices I use to convey the tentative nature of the views I express is the frequent insertion of inverted commas around terms and concepts that await further elaboration and a more precise definition.

I have come to the present project after spending most of my academic life digging up documents in Middle Eastern (Turkish, Egyptian) and European (British, French) archives. Despite the obstacles often thrown in the way of such an enterprise by governments and individuals, it is one of the most challenging, fascinating, and rewarding pursuits. But, every so often, the tremendous energies expended in the process – over language acquisition, manuscript deciphering, cultural decoding, and general nit-picking – tend to obscure the macro issues. For some time, I have personally felt the need to address that level and attempt some sort of synthesis. With all the risks and trepidation involved, the exploration of what the French call *les structures* has held, at least for me, an enormous attraction. This sentiment, too, was shared by Albert Hourani in his last years.[3] Thus, while recognizing that God may very well be in the minute detail, I hope too that He or She is also in the larger picture.

Ottoman history is certainly one of the most advanced sub-fields in Middle Eastern studies. This is partly because of the availability and variety of sources, almost without parallel in any other period of Islamic history. But partly, too, it reflects the open-mindedness of

some leading Ottomanists, who have applied methods from the social sciences, thereby balancing the conservatism that the study of the Ottoman registers (*defters*), known to the in-group as 'defterology', has for years imposed on the field. Ömer Lutfi Barkan, Halil Inalcik, Norman Itzkowitz, Suraiya Farouqhi, Carter V. Findley, and the new generation of Turkish Ottomanists now involved in the Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey are only some of those to whom we owe the fact that, indeed, there is life after the exhausting study of the *siyakat* documents.

Thus, over the past two decades, an impressive corpus of excellent monographs has been produced in Western and Middle Eastern universities, dealing with the social, economic, political, intellectual, and cultural aspects of Ottoman history.[4] Many have been published, others remain under the unhappy category of 'unpublished PhD dissertation'. Much scholarly and intellectual effort went into studies that usually cover one province during a well-defined, usually not too long, period. Modesty, over-caution, and most certainly legitimate personal preference for the micro, have rarely allowed a synthesis that would examine a larger territorial expanse during a *longue durée*.

Almost two decades have passed since the publication of Stanford Shaw's two-volume *The Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (the second volume co-authored with Ezel Kural Shaw) in 1976–78. It is quite remarkable that no general history of the Ottoman Empire has appeared since, perhaps in part because Shaw's work has drawn much criticism.[5] This must be contrasted with the proliferation in recent years of general works on the Middle East. Books by Stephen Humphreys, Ira Lapidus, Malcolm Yapp, Albert Hourani, and William Cleveland, in addition to revised editions of earlier textbooks by, among others, Sidney Nettleton Fischer and Arthur Goldschmidt, cover large chunks of territory over a number of centuries. Thus, a paradox of sorts has emerged: while highly qualified and well-trained Ottomanists have shied away from looking at generalizations, non-Ottomanists have been writing (with little or no use of Ottoman sources) about the history of the Arabs during the Ottoman centuries.

This has strongly reinforced what I would call the Localist-Arabist version of Ottoman provincial history. Reinforced, not created, because before this new wave of textbooks we already possessed a large corpus of works on the history of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire written from a local perspective, that is based on local, non-Ottoman

sources. Many of these are totally or partially decontextualized, that is they ignore, or merely pay lip service to, the Ottoman context of their subject matter. One of the criteria here is the very limited extent to which the texts produced in this discourse cohere with, or at least connect to, the discourse in Ottoman history.

As I have pointed out elsewhere, this is perhaps most blatantly manifested in the Arabicization of all Ottoman names and terms, e.g. *vâli* becoming *al-wālī*, *efendi* becoming *afāndi*, *kethüdâ* becoming *katkhodā* or *kathodā*, *binbaşi* becoming *bikbāshā* (mixing up *başi* and *paşa*).[6] Thus, not only are the terms distorted and a common scholarly language is lost, but gone also is the clear relation to the Ottoman background which can explain and present these terms for what they were. One thereby loses the feel of elite culture and its rich and complex bureaucratic tradition. Our ability to trace the fascinating interaction between the Ottoman and the Local–Arab, the central and the provincial, is thus severely impaired. A mere reference to the Turkish origin of terms, or a cursory acknowledgement in the narrative that the elite was 'Turkish' (as so many Localist-Arabists do when they are not using 'Turco–Circassian'), are clearly not enough; they fail to change the general impression with which the reader is invariably left – namely that the power elite under the Ottomans was Arab and Arabophone, which it was not.

Having said that, let me emphasize that in no way do I wish to argue against the local perspective. To the contrary, the recent increase in studies based on the records of the *shari'a* courts has brought us into a new phase in the study of social, economic, cultural, and political issues that would have otherwise been impossible. This is even more true with regard to the history of non-elite groups, the overwhelming majority of the population, who spoke Arabic and whose culture was predominantly local. However, my interest here is in the history of elites in the Middle East and North Africa, a theme that cannot, indeed should not, be broached in a non-Ottoman context.

By this I do not merely mean the obvious recognition of the fact that the Ottoman elite had some impact on the history of local elites, but rather that a proper study of those elites should be grounded in the interaction that took place from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth between the Ottoman elite and local elites. One of the main arguments in this paper is, in fact, that the dual, interactive process of *localization* and *Ottomanization* produced what I call

Ottoman–Local elites. This thesis is multi-dimensional by nature, encompassing the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. Albert Hourani clearly recognized the process, as he wrote that anyone who has travelled in the Middle East and North Africa 'must have noticed how deep the Ottoman impress went and how lasting is the unity it has imposed on many different countries and peoples.'[7]

Before we get more deeply into these processes, let us briefly review the historical backdrop against which they unfolded. The history of the Middle East and North Africa from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth has gone through three distinct phases that forged the main features of political, economic, social, and cultural life in the region. The Ottoman Empire conquered much of this vast area during the early and middle parts of the sixteenth century. It thus became the most important Muslim power, a position it retained for more than 400 years. During the nineteenth century, the Ottomans gradually lost their possessions in North Africa to France, except for Libya, while Egypt came under British rule. Western domination in the region reached its peak after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, giving rise to nationalist movements that won independence in the period following the Second World War.

Middle Eastern and North African societies went through major changes during their transition from Ottoman rule to Western domination and again to national independence. I chose to focus on the elites rather than on society as a whole or the lower strata, since power elites in the region were more directly affected by outside rulers than the rest of society. They came into daily contact with the Ottomans and Europeans who governed them, and had close political, economic, social, and cultural ties with them. It was also from among the elites of the region that nationalist leadership emerged in the twentieth century, which invites an examination of the impact that Ottoman rule, European domination, and nationalism have had upon these regional elites.

The processes of *inclusion* and *exclusion* which drove the relations between local elites and those who ruled them are the themes that run throughout the period under discussion. These processes determined the nature of the interaction between the local elites and the governing power, Ottoman or European. They also induced different reactions to the situation of political, socioeconomic, and cultural domination. If merger and integration prevailed during the

Ottoman period, alienation and confrontation took over under European imperialism. By thus shifting the focus, we can better explain the delayed emergence of Middle Eastern and North African nationalisms, as compared, say, with Balkan nationalisms. Scholars interested in the middle and late twentieth-century Middle East could then, hopefully, use some of these concepts to explore the reasons for the collapse of nationalist elites and the rise of military governments throughout the region not too many years after independence.

The Ottoman phase was not only the longest of the three phases mentioned above, but also the one in which sociocultural processes were more complex and slower to develop. During the first decades after the Ottoman conquest, the new rulers studied the problems and tried to understand the nature of each province. As Halil Inalcik noted, the Ottomans did not replace the local administration with their own, but were content to direct the affairs of government from above. The second stage was quite different. Having learned the economic system, the ways and means to extract revenues, and how to ensure security in a given district, the Ottomans installed their own administration, applied their laws and regulations, and integrated the province into the imperial system.

At the same time, following complete takeover, the imperial Ottoman elite slowly began a major process of inclusion. What it did in fact was to open the way for local elites to be integrated into the governing elite. I do not wish to make it sound too 'planned', in policy terms. Much of what happened occurred piecemeal, in response to developing needs, local situations, and personal ambitions. But the similarities that appeared throughout the geographic space treated in this work suggest that the change of attitude was not accidental, but conscious and, at points, clearly intended. Before we move any further, however, we must tend to some definitions, beginning with the nature of the Ottoman elite itself, and how it was recruited and socialized.

Essentially, the Ottoman elite (often referred to as the *askeri*) consisted of office-holders. For a man to have an elite status, he had to have a position in the upper ranks of the sultan's service. A woman had to be born to an elite member, or marry one. An office could be used to acquire wealth, but wealthy persons without an office in government did not belong to the Ottoman power elite, which meant that they had to pay taxes and work through informal channels in order to influence those in power, i.e., elite members. Money was

only one (albeit important) component of status; it was not the only, nor the supreme stratifier in Ottoman society.[8] Nor can money be *automatically* associated with (political) power. In the Ottoman Empire, power and honour emanated from the sovereign (the sultan), were embodied in the elaborate structure of *his* government, and were reflected in the titles and attached income (most often a task-oriented grant known as *dirlik*) that he conferred upon his *kul*s.

The supremacy of this system remained virtually unchallenged in the Middle East and (with some reservations) North Africa *throughout* the centuries of Ottoman rule. It is at times astonishing how the system continued to prevail in these societies, enjoying wide acceptance and legitimacy even when Ottoman prestige was not at its height. As decentralized modes of imperial government set in, and Ottoman power was projected indirectly in the provinces, the symbols of sultanic rule (the *berat*, the *nisan*, the *dirlik*, even *Istanbullu* fashion and other acquired tastes) were still highly desirable to Arab notables and regarded as conferring power-elite status.

Even the status obtained through *ilm*, or Islamic knowledge, was co-opted by the state, incorporated into its judicial and academic hierarchies, and valorized by the pay scales of the Ottoman treasury. Hence to argue that such analysis ignores the other elites in society, namely the rich merchants and high-ranking *ulama* (and in the nineteenth century one usually adds the native landed notability) is to miss the point that the Ottoman power elite (later the Ottoman–Local power elites) was not merely *primus inter pares*, but that it enjoyed supremacy in society, if not hegemony.

Another misleading notion is that the Ottoman power elite was a 'military society'.[9] The concept of a 'military-administrative' elite, as used by Metin Kunt, Rhoads Murphey, Carter Findley and others, is far more useful, as it conveys the sense of a broader, more loosely integrated, more diversified group, rather than the sense of a military caste, segregated in barracks, apart from the rest of society that 'military' definitions often create. The symbolic architecture of the citadel (*kale*, Arabic *qal'a*) can perhaps make this point more eloquently than many words: that seat of the Ottoman government was situated *inside* the city walls, but on an elevated spot, *overlooking* the city from above. Intermingling was by no means unusual until the middle of the nineteenth century, and the population of many urban neighbourhoods in fact included members of various strata (and statuses) who inhabited

the same or adjacent spaces.

But, to go back in history, the core of the Ottoman elite originally comprised the sultan's military slaves, recruited and socialized into the elite through a selective and competitive merit system. Severed from their families, they were converted to Islam (if born Christian), then trained and educated at the Palace School in Istanbul. They were later placed in military and administrative positions in the capital and throughout the empire. Theoretically, and often in practice too, they were loyal to the sultan alone, and upon their death, their property reverted to him. Women were also recruited and socialized into the elite in the *harems* of the great urban centres of the empire.

However, from a rather early stage, various elements of this ideal-type situation were not strictly adhered to. Free-born Muslim youths were also allowed to join that prestigious recruitment and socialization course. High-ranking provincial administrators developed their own version of the Palace School and recruited young men for their retinues and young women for their extended households (*kapis*, see below). And gradually, the notion of the 'sultan's slaves' became more theoretical, less effective, resembling 'office-holders in the sultan's government'.

What nevertheless did survive the test of time and circumstances – alongside other methods of recruitment – was the practice of enlisting young men for military-administrative service (and young women for procreation and social reproduction) by uprooting them from a distant environment in the hope that personal loyalty to a master/mistress would replace biological parenthood. This was the idea behind the centuries-old recruitment of *mamluks* in the Middle East and North Africa. With variations, the same concept also created the *kapikulus*, or slaves of the sultan, described above.

Graduates of that system could be placed according to their skills and talents anywhere in the empire, from the sultan's palace to the most remote province. They could rise to army officers, or become administrators at the centre or the provinces. Their task was to govern the sultan's domains. They could be moved from one region to another, from one type of job to another. They professed a common religion (Islam), shared a deeply-rooted loyalty to the ruling House of Osman, accepted as canonical the set of norms enshrined in the *seriat* (Arabic *shari'a*) and the *kanun*, spoke a common language (Ottoman Turkish), and acquired a highly articulated culture, which distinguished them

from anyone who did not belong to the imperial elite. But they came from different ethnic backgrounds, spoke different mother tongues, and displayed a large array of complexions and physiognomies. This heterogeneity ensured a certain degree of tolerance within the elite and often also beyond.

Albert Hourani noticed the indelible marks that Ottoman elite culture left on the political elites of the Middle East and North Africa. What could still be discerned, he wrote, was:

> ... the formal and elaborate manners of the old families of Istanbul and the provincial capitals ... [and] a certain style of government and politics, difficult to describe but which continued almost until our time, not only among Turkish politicians but in the palaces of Baghdad, Amman, Cairo and Tunis, among the older statesmen of Egypt before the revolution, and the older nationalist leaders of Syria, Iraq and Balkan countries – patient, cautious, carefully balancing one force against another in order to neutralise them all, giving your enemy time and scope to ruin himself, seeing how far you can go but always leaving a way of escape if you have gone too far.[10]

With the beginning of the seventeenth century, a major process of transformation set in. Very briefly, and no doubt superficially, it can be described as follows. The change in warfare doctrines and tactics, induced by the increased and more advanced use of firearms and the emergence of the siege as the main form of combat, caused the size of the Ottoman army to soar. From a relatively compact force of about 15,000 men, organized around the sultan's household, or *kapi* (hence *kapikullari*), the number of troops in the second half of the seventeenth century exceeded 100,000. To mount a campaign became a highly sophisticated, immensely complex and multi-dimensional operation, involving at times up to 400,000 persons in many supportive and combat capacities (as in the campaign to recapture Baghdad in 1638).[11] Such huge bodies of people were marched across Anatolia and back, with all that this implied for the economic life of the population residing on the king's road. Incidentally, with such capabilities, one might wish to reflect on the reality of the concept known as 'Ottoman decline'.

The sultan's army (or the Porte's army, as it is often referred to) could not be housed in the capital any more. With needs shifting to the maintenance of garrison units in border provinces throughout the

empire, the large and by now much less homogeneous force was deployed in many provincial towns. The *timar* system was gradually replaced by a cash-based tax-farming mechanism, which supplied the financial requirements of the central government and new army. This phenomenon, ably described by Metin Kunt, Rhoads Murphey, and others, marks the beginning of what I call the process of *localization*. The main manifestations of that process were:

1. The rise of the *kapi*, or household (sometimes called the 'grandee household' to distinguish it from just any household), as the major military, political, economic, and social unit in the Ottoman provincial setting;
2. The recruitment of *reaya* (sometimes *raiyyet*), or non-*askeri* (i.e. non-elite) subjects, into these *kapi*s as retainers;
3. The growing confinement of district and province governors, as well as lower level officers and bureaucrats, to service in one limited area (what Kunt calls 'regionalism');
4. The concomitant emergence of a complex network of interrelations between the military-administrative elite and the local population, most notably with the provincial elites, also known as the *ayan*s (*a'yan* in Arabic), or notables.

As mentioned above, this process of localization intensified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when it was accompanied by a parallel process of Ottomanization. Let me stress here that by Ottomanization I mean the gradual political, economic, social, and cultural integration of provincial notable families into the Ottoman elite. This was a multi-faceted process which by nature was not uniform; rather, in certain regions it was more socioeconomic than political, in others it was more political than cultural, and in others yet, it was more sociocultural than economic or political. In order to fully comprehend it, we must allow for different realities in the Balkans, Anatolia, the Middle East, and North Africa. Also, Ottomanization progressed at a different pace in different provinces, or regional clusters of provinces. The key element in cultural and administrative Ottomanization, for example, was the acquisition of Ottoman Turkish as the *lingua franca*, with its entire cultural 'baggage' (sometimes adopted only partially and selectively). Thus in Anatolia the cultural aspect of Ottomanization was much less an issue, since there, the

provincial notability spoke Turkish and was not separated from the *askeri* by an explicit cultural divide. However, in the Arabic-speaking provinces of the Middle East and North Africa, political and social Ottomanization required to a greater extent cultural adaptation and interaction with a foreign group. There can be little surprise, therefore, that in the Arab provinces Ottomanization began late in the seventeenth century, progressed slowly, and took hold only in the course of the eighteenth century.

In practical terms, the dual process of *localization-Ottomanization* occurred as Ottoman soldiers, officers, and administrators, gradually developed local interests, joined the local economy, and married local women. They learned Arabic, acquired local tastes, and became locally acculturated. At the same time, members of wealthy families and urban notables achieved Ottoman power-elite status by entering the administration. They accepted the privileged position of Ottoman culture and sought education in the imperial system, either in Istanbul or locally. They learned Ottoman Turkish, and were trained for government posts. The competition among these families for upper-echelon government jobs carrying elite status was often fierce, and (to the delight of the imperial centre ('local' interests were not infrequently sacrificed in the process.

From this dual process of inclusion, Ottoman–Local elites emerged in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, elites that I designate Ottoman–Egyptian, Ottoman–Syrian, Ottoman–Iraqi, Ottoman–Tunisian, and Ottoman–Algerian (until the French occupation) became the predominant groups in their respective societies. The sociocultural process that enabled their emergence was (in and of itself) also a dual one by nature: it expanded elite ranks to incorporate local groups, but at the same time also elaborated and diluted what constituted elite culture. Thus, Ottoman–Local elite cultures came to be a mixture of imperial Ottoman and local elements, as can be seen, for example, in the natural incorporation of Arabic words into the Ottoman Turkish spoken in these areas – and conversely, in the Turkish vocabulary and grammatical forms that entered, in varying measures, into the Arabic dialects of the region.

These processes had a major political impact on the regions treated here, in that they slowed down the disintegration of Ottoman rule. The success of the inclusivist nature of these processes ensured the loyalty of local elites to the empire and enabled them to feel a strong

sense of belonging to the Ottoman community. When the moment of challenge came, the sultan could rely on the loyalty of his provincial governing elites. As nationalism swept across the European parts of the Empire, and later in the First World War, there was little enthusiasm for separatism or secession in the Middle East (North Africa, except for Libya, had by then already fallen under European imperialism). Even later, after the empire had disintegrated, sentiments of loyalty lingered on, nostalgia for Ottoman times persisted, and sociocultural vestiges remained among urban elites in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent.

A sociocultural interpretation of these macro-processes must not, however, lose sight of, nor belittle, the great importance of the economic aspect. Localization inevitably meant that the local economies in the provinces now had to support an additional group of non-tax paying, privileged persons. This was not a voluntary process, as the office-holders being localized were given by the imperial government the official tools needed to appropriate a significant share of the surplus. Mechanisms to assess and levy legitimate and illegitimate taxes (*iltizams*) transferred to office-holders considerable revenues collected in the name of the state.

However, with the rise of the *kapi* (elite household), a growing portion of the revenues appropriated by such office-holders remained in the province to maintain those large and costly establishments. A wide range of local people found employment and protection in *kapi*s, becoming *kapihalki*, or protégées of a grandee household. The *kapi* became a source of employment and protection, but also a of focus of one's identity. So much so that the term *kapisiz*, one without a *kapi*, meaning unaffiliated, unattached to a social network, came to mean an 'unemployed person' and a homeless person, reflecting the social and economic consequence of that unfortunate state.

Thus, I suggest that localization and the rise of the kapi were related and intertwined processes. In the circumstances that accompanied localization, the kapi was the most efficient formation for coping with the kind of political, social, and economic changes that were taking place in the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Elite kapis emulated the sultan's kapi on a smaller scale, with actual size being determined by the wealth of the kapi head; they also acted as the chief agent of recruitment and socialization into Ottoman–Local elites.

*Kapi*s emerged throughout the elite, within the *ocak*s (garrison regiments in the provinces), outside the military, and among the *a'yan*. They spread *intisap* (patronage) networks in the provinces that reached the central government and placed *kapi* members in military and administrative positions to promote *kapi* interests. One of the methods of recruitment used by the *kapi*s was the *mamluk* system, and young men and women were purchased by *kapi* heads and trained in their compounds for military and government jobs, and for running the household. But free-born Muslim volunteers and children of *kapi* officials and of *kapikullari* were entered in even larger numbers. The fact that *mamluk*-type recruitment was common in the *kapi*s led Arab chroniclers to misrepresent these men as relics of the old Mamluk regime and later to claim (with the support of superficially-informed contemporary European sources) that in Egypt, Iraq, and elsewhere, Mamluks took over the government from the hands of the Ottomans.

In the Arab provinces, as elsewhere in the empire during the early eighteenth century, some of the *kapi*s gained what I would call 'provincial ascendancy'. At times, these managed to extend their ascendancy beyond one generation and create *kapi* 'dynasties'. The central government worked through the *kapi* networks to further the interests of the sultan and the central administration, employing various tactics to ensure a certain measure of control over revenues, trade, and such vital imperial 'instruments' as the operation of the annual pilgrimage to the Hijaz. This continuous redefinition of imperial boundaries and dynamic transformation of imperial control mechanisms throughout the 'long eighteenth century' has often been misinterpreted under the construct of 'Ottoman decline'.

The familiar notion of a continuous and unmitigated Ottoman decline from the end of the sixteenth century onward served as a handy explanation for much of what went on (or rather did not) in the history of the Arab peoples between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. The main flaw of explanations based on the notion of Ottoman decline is their all-encompassing nature: with the growth in scope and sophistication of studies treating the history of the empire in the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain a uniform view of processes over such a large geographic expanse, during such a long period of time, and covering all aspects of human history – the political, the economic, the social, the cultural, and others.

Hence, although eagerly cultivated by nationalist narratives throughout the Middle East, as elsewhere, that historiographic panacea seems to have fallen out of grace in the past two decades. More recent scholarship chooses to describe the processes that unravelled during the period of so-called decline as manifestations of remarkable adaptation to changing realities, which reflect the resourcefulness, pragmatism, and flexibility of the Ottoman imperial system, rather than its ineptitude. The success of such recent studies[12] has in fact revised our basic notions of seventeenth-century Ottoman history. However, more work is clearly required for the eighteenth century, when decentralization seems to have been greater and control mechanisms more complex and sophisticated. Thus, the rise of the Beys ('Mamluks') in Egypt and Iraq, the Azms in Syria, the Ma'ns in Lebanon, Zahir al-Umar in Palestine, the Deys and Beys in Ottoman North Africa, and others remains central to the undifferentiated thesis of Ottoman decline.

Far from wishing to argue for a renewed Golden Age in the period and space under review here, I think that much is wrong with the traditional interpretation of Ottoman elite history during the 'long eighteenth century'. Overemphasis on the local and Arab, to the neglect of the Ottoman, has managed to submerge imperial history and pronounce the virtual disintegration of Ottoman central authority, its projected power, economic significance, and sociocultural influence. In a way, we might say that Albert Hourani's 'Politics of Notables' prevailed over Albert Hourani's 'Ottoman Background'. However, as already mentioned above, a great deal of work on specific provinces has already been done over the past two decades to put that history back into an Ottoman context. Keenly interested in the on-going work of young scholars, Hourani was of course well-aware of these developments, as reflected in the following passage from his *A History of the Arab Peoples*:

> Rather than speaking of [Ottoman] decline, it might be more correct to say that what had occurred was an adjustment of Ottoman methods of rule and the balance of power within the empire to changing circumstances. By the end of the eighteenth century the Ottoman dynasty had existed for 500 years and had been ruling most of the Arab countries for almost 300; it was only to be expected that its ways of government and the extent of its control would change from one place and time to another.[13]

I believe that most of the studies compiled with this fresh attitude in mind actually fit into a larger picture, or interpretative framework, the contours and texture of which should now be spelt out.

One of the features of that framework is the rise of the *kapi*, which occurred throughout the regions concerned. There is nothing about this process that is non-Ottoman, or specifically local (i.e. Arab), and which would justify classifying it under some other category, e.g. Mamluk. Rather, the supremacy of the Ottoman structure in the regional subsystem encompassing the Arab provinces ensured a continuity that withstood the test of time. That it did through the control of government appointments (the key to power-elite status) and tax mechanisms (the key to income generation), as well as through imperial elite culture (which I see as a dynamic construct developing along the Ottoman–local continuum). Adaptive and flexible by its very nature, this structure continued to manage internal conflict and contain centrifugal pressures until the end of empire. The successful operation of *kapi* networks enabled the continued incorporation of the local, provincial notability into *Ottoman–Local* elites, that remained loyal to the idea of an Ottoman Empire well into the First World War.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Ottoman–Localelites had already become Local–Ottoman, both in composition and in sociocultural terms. It was then that they were beginning to respond to the stimuli of nationalism, already widely embraced in the European parts of the Ottoman Empire. But the time 'lost' under Ottoman rule, was quickly 'made up' under the alienating effect of European domination. In this respect, the Middle East moved faster than North Africa, with Egypt leading the way. In contrast to Ottoman inclusivism, British imperial administrations in Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq, and French ones in Syria and Lebanon, were guided by exclusivism in both theory and practice.

British and French governors and bureaucrats had no desire to integrate local elites into their political, economic, social, and cultural system of domination. They hired skilled persons from among the local population to help them govern and reduce daily friction with the governed. They sought to imbue in local elites basic elements of European culture, usually through education and the press, to facilitate their control and provide the 'common ground' necessary to generate a measure of loyalty and minimize resistance. They had a clear view

of the line that set them apart from the local elites, and they discouraged any attempt to cross it in either direction: wogs were wogs, and renegades were renegades (in this respect, there were some differences between British and French attitudes).

The demise of the Ottoman Empire deprived Local–Ottoman elites of a world they knew well and were comfortable with. Its main components were: a well-rooted loyalty to a legitimate sovereign dynasty; an elaborate set of political-social-economic networks; a widely accepted legal system and concept of state justice; a mitigating and mediating sociocultural 'safety valve'; well-articulated collective identity and system of meaning; and, finally, the obvious (though, to my mind, overrated) bond of a common religion. The loss of these was further exacerbated by the increased diversion of local resources towards the imperial centres in Europe, and led the very same Local–Ottoman elites to embrace active nationalism.

Equipped with the necessary sociopolitical tools and enjoying the support of the lower strata through elaborate patronage networks (survival of the *kapi* system), these elites led the struggle against foreign occupation and for national independence. Trained in the Ottoman administration and, in many cases, well conversant in a European language (more often French than English) leading members of Middle Eastern elites formed political parties, launched an effective campaign in the press, organized mass demonstrations, and then negotiated with the occupying powers treaties that gradually increased their countries' measure of self-rule and ultimately independence.

In the period following the Second World War, all Middle Eastern and North African states gained independence, some a decade or two before others. But in all, the old elites that had evolved over time out of Ottoman–Local elites continued to hold power for only a short period. Except for Lebanon, Jordan, and Tunisia (three acknowledged special cases) military regimes replaced all of them, with almost no, or little, resistance. The new military-administrative elites that emerged from this change are still in power throughout the region.

Indeed, as Hourani observed in the passages quoted above, the formative impact of the four-centuries' long Ottoman experience upon the political culture and behaviour of Middle Eastern and North African elites could still be observed during the first quarter of this century. Hence, one might speculate that their rapid disintegration had something to do with the disruption of the inclusivist system

which the Ottomans had put in place and continuously maintained over time. Beyond speculation, all I can do is hope that this project (if and when completed) will also assist scholars working on the twentieth century in their attempt to explain the collapse of the old elites and their failure to reproduce themselves in sociocultural terms (the political and economic aspects of that collapse have already been explained in a fairly convincing manner).

Notes

1. An early piece was published in Beirut in 1960, entitled 'The Fertile Crescent in the Eighteenth Century', in *A Vision of History*. As will be shown below, that line of inquiry was later developed in 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables' and 'The Ottoman Background to the Modern Middle East,' both reprinted in his *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (London, 1981), pp. 36–66 and 1–18 respectively. The Ottoman chapters (13–17) in Hourani's *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London, 1991), attest to the fact that he never stopped thinking about and developing his view of Ottoman–Arab history.

2. See n. 1 for full citation.

3. See his address to the readers of *IJMES*, vol. 23/2 (1991): 125–36, under the title 'How Should We Write the History of the Middle East?'

4. To mention just a few of the authors (going from Anatolia via Iraq to Algeria): Metin Kunt, Rhoads Murphey, Rifaat Abou-el-Haj (Anatolia), Hanna Batatu (Iraq), Karl Barbir, Linda Schilcher, Abdul-Karim Rafeq, Philip Khoury (Syria), Leila Fawaz (Lebanon), Amnon Cohen, Dror Ze'evi, Beshara Doumani (Palestine), Robert Hunter, Juan Cole, Jane Hathaway (Egypt), Michel Legalle (Libya), Carl Brown (Tunisia), Tal Shuval (Algeria).

5. See, for example, Klaus Kreiser's article, which contains a summary of reviews: 'Clio's Poor Relation: Betrachtungen zür Osmanischen Historiographie von Hammer-Purgstall bis Stanford Shaw,' *Wiener Beitrage zür Geschichte der Neuzeit*, vol. 10 (1983): 24–43.

6. *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, pp. 21–2.

7. 'Ottoman Background', p. 2.

8. Here, the Weberian notion of 'status group', as distinct from class, is useful. For a brief adaptation of this concept to Ottoman realities, see Serif Mardin, 'Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire', *Comparative Culture and Society* 9 (1969): 263–4 (though the article is somewhat dated, it is still helpful).

9. See Jane Hathaway's otherwise excellent work, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: the Rise of the Qazdaglis* (Cambridge, 1997).

10. 'Ottoman Background', p. 2.

11. Rhoads Murphey, *The Functioning of the Ottoman Army under Murad IV (1623–1639/1032–1049): Key to the Understanding of the Relationship*

between Center and Periphery in Seventeenth-Century Turkey (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1979).

12. For a recent and excellent portrayal of how these mechanisms worked in the seventeenth century, see Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: the Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Cornell, 1995).

13. London, 1991, p. 250.

6 ❁ The 'Politics of Notables' to the 'Politics of Nationalism': The Husayni Family, 1840–1922

Ilan Pappé

The urban notable families of the Arab Ottoman provinces, the a'yan, were one of Albert Hourani's main scholarly interests. This article is inspired by that interest. Since they were literate, effective and active, urban notable families appear more accessible to the historian than many other social groups in Arab history. Furthermore, focusing on families gives the historian a chance to assess the place of the smallest social unit, or even that of the individual, within the context of wider systematic and structural changes. The wider context in our case is the constitutional and political transformation of the Middle East at the end of the Ottoman era and our case study is the chronicle of a Jerusalemite family, the House of the Husaynis. In this article we will try to assess the place of the family within that internal, slow and measured process of change which transformed the lives of people all over the Middle East.

A closer look at the Husaynis gives us an opportunity not only to examine what the manifestations of change and development were at the local level, but also to widen the accepted historiographical view on Palestine in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a view which has hitherto tended to be conflictual in nature, focusing as it does, for the most part, on the clash between Zionism and the local Palestinian population. We wish to view the social history of Palestine – a path historians only recently have begun to take – as a continuum within the social history of the Ottoman Empire, much as Albert Hourani has done in his works. At the same time, we will do so from a narrow angle: the view of events from Shaykh Jarakh, the neighbourhood which was the Husaynis' domicile for centuries. But this is a perspective which, for no justifiable reason, has been absent from the historiographical Rashomon of Palestine's history.

How to define the nature of the general transformation of Arab societies in the Middle East in modern times has been the topic of an ongoing debate among students of the area. Following the post-Orientalist challenge, the once common terms 'modernization' and 'Westernization' have largely been replaced by the more neutral 'development' and 'transformation'.[1] Albert Hourani continued to adhere to 'modernization' even in his final works. Inspired by Clifford Geertz's treatment of the question of modernization, he chose to describe the process as an internal one, rather than as the simplistic imitation of one culture by another:

Ideas and institutions which had first developed in Western Europe and North America, for historical reasons which could be analysed, might not be essentially 'Western': they might in course of time become culturally 'neutral', so to speak, the common property of all societies of modern age. When they came into a society, they would not necessarily change it into something other than itself; they might be absorbed into and adapted by a society which still continued to exist and to move in its own way.[2]

In the Ottoman Empire these internal processes of change and development were usually slower and less dramatic than the pace of modernization in Europe and North America, and were of a particularly measured progress in the more marginal Ottoman provinces. A slower pace enabled societies to adapt more comfortably to change, and in our case seems to have suited perfectly the modus operandi of the local urban elite in the Arab provinces, Hourani's 'politics of notables'.[3] For Hourani, who had never carried out any intensive empirical research on the subject, this was an abstract notion which was then tested by several scholars in a number of studies of which Philip Khoury's on Syria's notables is the most recent one.[4]

The 'politics of notables' is the principal explanation for the success with which certain families in the Arab world maintained their positions as the social urban elite for long periods. Their nobility rested on the double-edged legitimacy these families were granted by their own society and by the central authority in Istanbul. Their high standing in society was based on a religious genealogy which usually went back to the Prophet and his circle of close friends and which was respected by Istanbul. For the Ottomans, who avoided direct rule as much as they could, it meant that they could entrust the notables with important positions within the provinces. It was the navigating

and balancing skills required of them which became the essence of the 'politics of notables'. Its tactics became the ethical and political code of the urban society in the Arab world during the Ottoman period and remained so during the transitional era from which local nationalism was to emerge and, eventually, independence.

Mediating between the society they represented and the authority that appointed them, the notables had to tread carefully. Their particular position enabled the central government in Istanbul to administer the provinces from afar and at the same time provided local society with a buffer – albeit not always a resilient one – against the whims and caprices of the regional or central rulers. The key to the notables' success was moderation – a virtue that safeguarded their high rank throughout the political dramas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the region became an arena for colonialist competition and a stage for insurgent local rulers trying to implement their dreams of independence and sovereignty.

The leading families of Jerusalem in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries practised to a certain extent this set of political rules. We are particularly interested in their behaviour as a social unit during what Hourani called the fourth, and last, phase in Ottoman history, which began roughly in 1860 (but in the case of Jerusalem may have begun in 1840 with the return of the Ottomans to Palestine after losing it for nine years to Muhammad Ali). The developments within this phase posed the greatest challenge to the old Ottoman political code and to the rules underlining the 'politics of notables'. The challenge seemed so formidable to Hourani that it led him to conclude that in many cases the code had become useless and the notables proved helpless in the face of the modernizationist zeal of a new breed of reformist sultans in Istanbul – the onset of the Tanzimat for him signalled the end of the 'politics of notables'.

Whereas this judgement applied in many Arab areas, Jerusalem seems to have been an exception. International politics and a rather belated political and economic prospering of the city delayed the disintegration of old establishments and habits in this part of the Ottoman Empire, to the extent that in Jerusalem the 'politics of notables' appears to have remained intact and effective until the outbreak of the First World War. Its tactics were a successful means in the hands of the Husaynis for preserving their status and position in the city of Jerusalem and then also in the independent *sanjaq* of

Jerusalem when this was established in 1872. The Husaynis sustained and even strengthened their position by employing the traditional rules of the game when it came to digesting the newest of all human ideological inventions – nationalism. Thus, the same dexterity which had assisted the Husaynis to navigate skilfully between society and the external authorities during the nineteenth century remained useful in the twentieth century until at least well into the 1920s. However, as I hope to show, sticking to proven old codes and attitudes towards politics had its price. It was not good enough as a tactics of survival in the face of a dynamic force such as the Zionist movement or a formidable colonial power such as Britain. In Egypt and Iraq, for instance, British rule was terminated by a new social class which had substituted the 'politics of notables' with that of nationalism. In Palestine, these new social forces emerged only after the loss of the land and the country in 1948.

Before tracing the success and demise of the code of the 'politics of notables' it is necessary to provide the reader with a brief history of the family as it illuminates what Hourani meant by the term and brings out the patterns of continuity and change in our story.

A Short History of the Husayni Family

The family's origins are elusive and remain the subject of debate till this day. The versions put forward by self-appointed historians of the family reflect its sense of antiquity: the Husaynis are depicted as one of the oldest Muslim families descending directly from Husayn Ibn Ali and arriving in Jerusalem around 800. The family's rivals claim that it can boast no such impressive and prestigious genealogy but in fact had far humbler origins: the family was originally called al-Aswad (the black ones) and it was Hajj Amin al-Husayni's grandfather, Mustafa al-Aswad, who had improved the family's position by marrying into a family called the Husaynis and, uncommon for those days, adopting his wife's family name.[5] In the family biography he wrote, Musa Ishaq al-Husayni, the only leading member of the family in modern times who shunned politics and embarked on an intellectual career, tried to establish a direct link between the Husaynis and the Imam Zayid Ibn al-Abadin of the Yamanite people. According to him, the first recorded member of the family is Badr ibn Mahmud, a social leader of his time, who died in 1252 (and was buried in the *zawiya* of Wadi Nasur in Jerusalem) and thus the family was referred

to, at first, as Badriyya. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the family then made its way within the city's walls. Musa Ishaq al-Husayni seems to regard his family and another well-known family, al-Husayni al-Wafa#i, as one and the same.[6]

More recent scholars, however, such as Butrus Abu-Maneh and Adel Mana trace the family to the chronicles of the house of Ghudaya, a well-reputed family, who became Husaynis either due to their marriage into the house of al-Husayni al-Wafa'i (in Abu-Maneh's version) or by inheriting that family's name and title after the latter had led an abortive rebellion in 1705 (according to Adel Mana).[7] Both these scholars agree that the first recorded member, whom both therefore view as the head of the family in recent times, was Abd al-Latif al-Qudsi who had been *naqib al-ashraf* (the head of the notables) at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Abd al-Latif's sons and grandsons held on to that position and succeeded not much latert to the no less important post of *shaykh Haram al-Sharif*. Abd al-Latif died in 1775 and two of his sons, Hasan and Abdullah, divided the family's main positions between them. Hasan, as the *naqib*, added a new domain to the family's powerful possessions, by obtaining the *ifta'* (the position of the Hanafi *mufti*). He wisely divided the spoils with his relatives and left the *niqaba* eventually in the hands of his brother Abdullah.

This division led to the formation of two main branches in the family, which became separate social units – and hence kept apart for instance as far as intermarriage was concerned – but would behave as a cohesive unit in political affairs. One branch was descended, though not directly, from Hasan ibn Abd al-Latif. Hasan had been a reputed theologian in his time and it was natural for those in the family who held the *ifta'* to regard him as their forefather. Within the family this branch is sometimes referred to as the Tahiri branch, after Hasan's nephew, Tahir al-Husayni, who had succeeded his uncle in that position. The last *mufti* in this chain was Hajj Amin al-Husayni, who would become the Grand Mufti of Palestine – those before him were just the Hanafi *mufti*s of the city. The family's adherence to the Hanafi *madhab* proved a fortunate coincidence when in 1785 it became the favoured *madhab* of the sultans in Istanbul.

The more secular branch was the one holding successfully the *niqaba* in the city and later, as of the 1860s, the mayorship of the city. It is referred to as the Umari branch, after the name of Abdullah's

brother who inherited the position. The third post, *shaykh al-haram*, remained in the family almost throughout but lost its importance in the late Ottoman period.

Thus it was in the third phase (in Hourani's periodization) of Ottoman history, 1760–1860, when old challenges met new ones, that the family began to establish itself as a leading force. Its main agenda consisted of internal struggles with other rival families in order to keep the three posts of *naqib al-ashraf*, *mufti* and *shaykh al-haram* in its hands. Simultaneously, the family had to cope with the aggressiveness and greediness of the city's local Ottoman governors and even more so of the regional governors in Damascus, Beirut and Acre, who all strove to control Palestine in the name of the Ottoman Empire, or – in the case of Egypt's Muhammad Ali – in the name of a new political entity. These political developments intertwined with the mundane business of running the social institutions of the city for those who were in the *niqaba* branch or with the more elevated richness of theological and literary debates and discussions enjoyed by those holding the chain of *ifta'* or *mashyakhat al-haram*.

One feature of the third phase that would still affect the family in the next one was the rivalry being played out in the vicinity of Jerusalem between the clans of Qays and Yaman. This division between local clans went back to the rivalries between the Northern (Qays) and Southern (Yaman) tribes in the formative years of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and their resettlement in the Fertile Crescent later on.[8] On the basis of this coalition the Husaynis, being of Yamani extraction, kept allegiance to the rural Yamani lord of the Jerusalem mountains Mustafa Abu Ghosh, who was in constant friction with the Qaysi coalition for control over land and villages. There is a debate among scholars of the period as to how long these feuds continued. Some claim that this division of loyalties still existed in 1920, while others see them as of secondary importance since the second half of the nineteenth century.[9] Miriam Hoexter sensibly remarks that, all in all, this rivalry was a rural phenomenon and that since Jerusalem was more urban in nature, it mattered less in the city's affairs.[10] Nonetheless, it was still there in the 1840s and did have its effect in the sense that, within the city's parameters, the Khalidis lead the Qays faction and the Husaynis the Yamani. The difference is that the rivalry between the families was for contemporary positions and not in the name of this or that coalition, that is, the Yamani allegiance was used by the

Husaynis as facilitating mediation between feuding rural lords or in order to widen its influence beyond the city's walls. This patronage connection strengthened the Husaynis' influence, for instance, in the Bethlehem area, as the town was mainly Yamani. It was in a way a foreign policy device within the 'politics of notables'.

This role of mediation was a dominant feature in the 'politics of notables' towards the end of the third phase and the beginning of the fourth. In the spring of 1855, there was wide unrest in Jabal Nablus with the Jarrars and the Tuqans colliding with the Abd al-Hadis. The feud had been aggravated by the policies of Ibrahim Pasha during his short reign in Palestine where he exercised to perfection the age-old device of *divide et impera*. The central government constantly failed to appoint a neutral ruler, each coalition wishing to install its own candidate. The pasha and the notables of Jerusalem intervened and convinced both sides to accept a compromise candidate, Sheikh Darwish of Nabi Da'ud. The Husaynis were the ones to facilitate this entente. The Tuqans were related to the Husaynis through marriage and thus were more receptive to the Husaynis' pacification efforts while the Abd al-Hadis had never been in direct confrontation with the Husaynis and thus also accepted their mediation.[11]

But this seemed to be the last meaningful involvement of the family in such feuds. With the end of the Crimean war, local feuds moved to the margins of the family's agenda, giving way to more serious challenges: the perils of foreign intervention, the threatening nature of the reforms instigated by the last Ottoman rulers – which were to culminate in the secularization and Turkification of the Empire after the 'Young Turks' revolution – and finally the threats posed by the appearance of the Zionist movement in Palestine.

The Perils of Foreign Intervention

The Napoleonic invasion of Palestine at the beginning of the nineteenth century left little or no mark on Jerusalem. Bonaparte regarded the city and its location as insignificant and the Ottomans continued to rule it more or less without interruption as they had done ever since the sixteenth century. The delegates who governed in the name of the empire, and at times challenged its authority, alternated in amazing frequency during the eighteenth century, but none of them was too keen on allowing Europeans to settle in Jerusalem. It was only during the reign of the Sultan Mahmud II that some sort of

foreign presence was tolerated. In 1823, the first British missionaries arrived in the hope of converting the Jews in the city so as to precipitate the second coming of the Messiah.[12] But this was a minor development – and a not very successful one at that – in the Europeans' position in the city.

A considerable improvement in the status of foreigners in the city of Jerusalem occurred during the reign of Muhammad Ali over Palestine.[13] The more hospitable attitude reflected Ibrahim Pasha's benevolent policy towards the Christians and the Jews in the area and his insistence on equalling their status to that of the Muslims. For the Husaynis, Ibrahim's reforms meant that for the first time in their history they were confronted with a reality of an emancipatory nature. Tahir al-Husayni, as *mufti*, and Muhammad Ali al-Husayni, *naqib al-ashraf*, were included in a new *majlis al-shura* (consultative council) Ibrahim established in Jerusalem and which contained a fair representation of the two non-Muslim communities in the city.[14] Since it undercut their position, the Husaynis resented this development – hence their participation, in fact their leading roles, in the 1834 Palestine revolt against the Egyptian rule.[15]

Unlike Napoleon's *tour de force*, the onus of the Egyptian conquest came to lie squarely on Jerusalem, even more so when the city became the centre of the 1834 revolt. The Egyptian presence brought Palestine and Jerusalem into the sphere of Europe's 'Eastern Question'. Ibrahim opened the way for a deeper foreign intervention in the city's affairs by allowing European missionaries and consuls to be posted in Jerusalem.[16]

Istanbul, after its reconquest of Palestine, followed suit, displaying a more receptive attitude than before towards Europeans wishing to settle in Jerusalem as agents of their countries. As usual in the Ottoman–European relationship, it was the physical state of the churches in the Ottoman Empire which indicated how far the Sublime Porte was willing to go. By 1841, the governor in Jerusalem was ordered to approve any restoration works needed on the churches of the city, and soon after centuries of neglect repairs commenced.[17]

Abdülmajid II tried to balance these moves with showing more concern for the deteriorating exterior of the Haram al-Sharif but otherwise succeeded in antagonizing many of the local notables by increasing the powers of the local governors and allowing European consuls a free hand in judicial affairs that involved foreigners and local

citizens under their protection. The Husyanis did not adapt well to these new policies, which explains the low ebb in the family's status in Istanbul. As Hourani noted, Abdülmajid antagonized a quite considerable number of urban notables because of his policy,[18] and it was to take another fifteen years before the Husaynis were able to restore their former positions. They did so through an extremely clever execution of the 'politics of notables', and it certainly proved worth their while. During the 1850s, Jerusalem's administrative positions had acquired unprecedented political and economic importance, following a clear demographic growth generated by economic prosperity. When the Ottomans recaptured Jerusalem in 1840 it had 22,000 inhabitants, by 1861 there were about 68,000.[19]

But before attaining such success, the family went through difficult times, particularly vis-à-vis the European consuls, and in particular James Finn, British Consul between 1845 to 1862. Finn is still celebrated today in much of Israeli historiography as a reliable source for the period and revered as a precursor of the pro-Zionist British politicians of a later age. The Husaynis' animosity towards him, however, appears to have had very little to do with Finn's close relationship with the Jewish community in the city. Rather, it was his tendency to intervene in every aspect of the city's life which irritated the notables.

There is conflicting evidence on how involved the consuls were in the city's life. Finn attributes to himself and his colleagues a large measure of involvement, but he was never one to suffer from modesty or low self-esteem. For the notables, and particularly for the Husaynis, Finn personified the evils of foreign intervention. He complained regularly to Istanbul about the governor's close association with the 'effendis' in inciting violence against foreign visitors. On one occasion, the governor retaliated by convening an open *divan*, where in the presence of all the notables, he denounced Finn's allegations as false.

As head of the notables, Omar al-Husayni found himself on a direct collision course with Finn and considered it expedient to elicit support of the French consul, Bota.[20] In his dispatches to London, Finn protested about the French consul's disruption of his efforts to mediate between warring factions in the city, but one wonders who among the notables would ever have chosen Finn as mediator. The French consul, on the other hand, had gained the sympathy of both the governor, who had a French secretary, and of most of the notables.

Because of their Yamani allegiance to the dominant lord of the rural areas, Mustafa Abu Ghosh, the Husaynis were at first in the anti-British camp and in closer contact with the French. Finn's struggle against Abu Ghosh's control over the Christian pilgrimage roads from Jaffa to Jerusalem, put the British consul in direct confrontation with all Abu Ghosh's associates.[21]

At the height of the Ottoman reforms in the army in the 1840s Abu Ghosh tried to enlist disenchanted segments of the Turkish troops in Palestine to support his cause. Initiated by Mahmud II, the reforms led to frequent rebellions of the local garrisons throughout the Middle East, particularly on payment days, since these usually ended in disappointment. In these skirmishes, Finn sided with Istanbul, unlike his French colleague who joined forces with the city notables and appeared as mediator on behalf of the notables and the soldiers. For a while embittered soldiers sided with the French consul and the notables, but all potential partners backed off in the last moment before finding themselves climbing a mountain that might prove too high for them.

As irritating as the behaviour of Finn and other consuls must have been, it was typical of the Husaynis and other notables of Jerusalem first to resist the consuls, in order to assess how far they had the support of Istanbul and then accept them as a fact of life. In that sense Finn fared better than his predecessor in office, Young, and his successors again had a much better relationship with the notables. Young often clashed directly with the Husaynis. He regularly reported on a tacit alliance between the notables, particularly the Husaynis, and the Ottoman garrison which led to occasional attacks on the few British residents in the city. As a result, British visitors were advised not to ride alone in the Suq. Young on one occasion succeeded in forcing the governor to have soldiers whipped in public – an event which stirred up unrest and led to riots in the city against Christians. Many of the Muslims assembled near al-Omar Mosque chanting against the waving of Christian flags in the city. Omar al-Husayni and others encouraged them to stand firm against the expansion of Christian presence in Jerusalem.

The unrest continued throughout the summer of 1843 and until the autumn of 1844. Eventually five notables were exiled under pressure of the Europeans.[22] We do not have their names, so we do not know whether any of the Husaynis were included; but we may assume that

the notables as a whole felt offended by these measures, and Alexander Schölch may well be right in his assessment that this kind of European arrogance generated a proto-nationalist consciousness throughout Palestine which was aimed at blocking further foreign penetration.[23] At the same time, in the case of the Husaynis as well as other Jerusalemite families, it seems that their principal lesson was further adaptation: to learn to live with the new political actor on the scene, once it was clear that he had the power to move Istanbul to act against them.

With the end to the unrest of 1844, a new political fact was established. Within the balance of power of the city and the region the consuls had now to be considered. Recognizing the power of the consuls also meant foregoing ties with rebels such as Mustafa Abu Ghosh. The 'politics of notables' required mediation between the authorities and the rebellious notables, not siding with the challengers. This task became easier after the authorities mounted a ruthless operation against Abu Gosh in 1846, destroying once and for all the power of the family in the Jerusalem mountains. Some of the Husaynis sided with Abu Gosh to the very last moment. Ali, the son of Omar al-Husayni the *naqib al-ashraf*, was found with Mustafa Abu Ghosh when the latter was caught in the punitive operation.[24] Ali Ibn Omar and Mustafa Abu Ghosh were publicly humiliated when they were paraded through a crowd gathered in Jaffa where they were led to a ship that was meant to take them into exile outside Palestine. This was the last time a Husayni would find himself at loggerheads with the government, at least until the days of Jamal Pasha in the First World War.

Getting rid of Abu Ghosh brought the Ottomans financial gain, as he had controlled most of the tax roads leading to the city, and the consuls became a diplomatic asset, as that tax had been mainly collected from Christian pilgrims. The final showdown between the central government and Abu Ghosh in 1846 was, furthermore, a milestone in that it transformed the Husaynis' political approach. The new arrangements in the city and its surrounding area after Abu Ghosh's demise indicated how valuable the 'politics of notables' still were both to the Husaynis and the central government, notwithstanding the new influence of Europe. The Ottomans still needed the Husaynis and the Abu Ghoshs – they as yet lacked the power to impose a genuine centralized administration. Hence Mustafa Abu Ghosh and

Ali al-Husayni were not really exiled but instead were imprisoned without hard labour in a jail in Acre. Amir Abu Ghosh was appointed the head of Qaryat al-Aanab (Abu Gosh's headquarters). A new governor of Jerusalem tried further to appease the notables by reducing the level of taxation, although he still reported that he saw them as a danger to the government. The Husaynis' cooperative participation in installing the new order after the demise of Abu Ghosh helped them to regain part of the dominant position in the city they had lost in 1834, but it would take another ten years, until 1856, before they would fully recover.

After the Crimean war it became even more obvious that foreigners from now on would play a principal role in the city's politics: the alliance between the Ottoman Empire and an anti-Russian coalition in Europe during the war could only accelerate foreign intervention. The restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (which had burned down in 1850) culminated in a festive ceremony in September 1852 when Omar al-Husayni heard Afif Bey, a special envoy from the capital, announce the beginning of a new Christian phase in the history of Jerusalem. [25]

During Abdülhamid II's reign (1876–1908), the principal symbol of the increasing influence of foreign powers in Jerusalem were visits by members of Europe's leading royal houses, notable among which was that of Kaiser Wilhelm in October 1898. The Husaynis, by then once more the leading family in the city, participated in all the ceremonies and, as important members of the municipality and the city's council, took an active part in all preparations which included a fundamental overhaul of the road, illumination and water infrastructures in many parts of the city.[26]

Although Kaiser Wilhelm declared humbly in the Jerusalem churches he visited that 'I have come only for pilgrimage purposes', the political and economic interests underlying this visit did not escape the attention of notables such as the Husaynis.[27] How could they ignore the significance of such visits when it left the city's landscape more Christian than it had ever been in the last 500 years? Abdülhamid bestowed upon Wilhelm, as a gift, a plot of two dunams on Mount Zion to build yet another church there; the cornerstone was duly laid for the Dormition, an edifice that would break the skyline of old Jerusalem (it was completed only in 1910). The head of the Husaynis, Isma'il al-Husayni, discovered the extent of the Emperor's influence

when he was chosen to present him with some expensive gifts on behalf of the city's council upon his visit to the Haram al-Sharif, officially still an area closed to non-Muslims (although even the Jewish philanthropist, Moses Montefiore, had been invited by the Turks to pay a visit there in the 1850s). The emperor also visited Isma'il's house (today's Orient House), honouring the head of the family as the head of the notables in the city. In the 1830s Isma'il's predecessor, Omar al-Husayni, reigned over a Muslim city; Isma'il was functioning within a cosmopolitan and, increasingly, Christian, reality.

It was indeed during the Hamidian period that foreign doctors, constructors and a large number of pilgrims came to populate the alleys of the old city and by their sheer numbers changed its human panorama. 'There are too many foreign medical practitioners in Jerusalem and a young freshman from college will find it hard to set up a practice in the country,' warned the British consul in 1899.[28] But, all in all, like his predecessor, this consul was more than happy to watch Jerusalem change. He met 'proudly everywhere in the market retail and wholesale British products' and noted with satisfaction that 'the Christian holy places are packed with British tourists in hundreds at least twice a year, in the autumn and in spring'.[29]

Foreign intervention also changed the architectural face of the city. Economic investment by foreigners in construction, water, road and garden infrastructures made Jerusalem more accessible and liveable for a larger number of people. John Dickson, British consul in 1903, was particularly delighted with the abundance of missionary buildings that were springing up everywhere (though he may have been exaggerating; he was deprived after all of the so-called Jaffa Allowance which was duly transferred to the Jaffa consulate for the important place it held in British tourism and trade, but his words do fit with other descriptions of the city). The consul attributed much of the change to the visit of the German Emperor which, it seems, Kaiser Wilhelm's visit heralded the last phase in Jerusalem's transformation from an Ottoman town to a regional Mediterranean *sanjaq* capital where 'West meets East' – a feature which was to remain intact until 1948 when nationalism would again change the face of the city, this time into a battleground between two national movements and involving three religions.

In turn, however, this transformation resulted in a more polarized society and a growing alienation between rich and poor. Whereas in

former days, architectural uniformity had concealed divisions of power and fortune, the exterior of houses now began to reveal a new tendency to show off affluence. Prices, although officially under the control of the local *qadi*, rose steadily, reaching a peak during the 'Young Turks' era.[30] Dickson reported in 1903 that the cost of living in the city had been rising sharply owing to its growing political and commercial importance – he mentions a doubling of the city's population, size and trade in comparison to the 1880s.[31] He needed more money, obviously, but the growth he reported is corroborated by other sources. The main point he was trying to make, however, was that he thought his official position was too low for such a central city. With the Crimean war, many powers had begun conferring the rank of consul general on their representatives in Palestine. France had already raised the level of its consulate in the city in April 1853[32] and announced its new function as the protector of the Latin Convent. The Austrians followed suit and became the protectors of the Latin Patriarchate. By 1903 only the British Foreign Office was still refusing to upgrade its consulate.[33]

Britain, it seems, was less concerned with status than with economic concessions, such that gained by the British Khedival Line, who ran the steamers between Egypt and Palestine. The Austrians were running the country's mail-service and the French ran the train system and so the country's and the city's infrastructure was now created and maintained by foreign powers.[34]

Every sphere of life was affected. Palestine was slowly integrated into the world economy and hence exports and imports increased dramatically. And with the steady growth of shipping movement in and out of the port of Jaffa, Europeans of all possible religious and ideological persuasions, began entering the country en masse and no longer as individuals.[35]

Foreign trade played a major role in expanding the economy of Palestine. This should have provided the Husyanis with economic, not only political and social, benefits. But this time they were slow in adapting to the changes that were in motion. Instead it was the foreigners who mastered the new spheres of activity that were opening up as a result of the integration of the local economy into the world market. The only spin off for the Husyanis came from their ability to trade in land, which they owned in the area of Jerusalem and in more remote places such as Ramleh and Lydda. The Husaynis had already

become large landowners at the beginning of the nineteenth century and were, probably, among the richest in the city. They had come to own a good deal of land through the dismemberment of *awqaf*, a process they were deeply involved in.[36] Land was now a saleable rather than an agricultural asset, since technological advances, as Iris Agmon has pointed out, were confined to the German and Jewish settlements so that there was no sharp increase in agriculture production elsewhere. For them, this was as far as the 'modernizing' process would go.[37]

Local industry, on the other hand, was not dramatically transformed. Foreign trade increased the need for finance and credit for peasants and traders alike, and foreign banks opened more and more branches.[38] The *shari'a* does not allow interest, but in a flexible interpretation Muslim permission for the exchange and granting of gifts had enabled local entrepreneurs to become bankers with religious sanction. With the banks came the mail and the insurance companies. This new sphere of economic activity on the one hand was to lead to some Husayni ventures into banking – which did not succeed too well – and on the other, helped improve the family's gains from its soap factory, whose products had already been quite famous in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Acquiescence in a New Jerusalem: Remaining in Power but Losing the City

Integration into the world economy was further strengthened when in 1872 the independent *sanjaq* of Jerusalem was created. This new administrative division, of which more later, defined Palestine for the first time as a clear and cohesive geopolitical unit. Together with the newly won prosperity, it made Palestine even more coveted in the eyes of foreigners who would come and claim it as their past or future homeland. The increase in foreign interest around the turn of the twentieth century confronted locals in growing numbers with foreign presence. Interestingly, however, in the area of Jerusalem there is hardly any evidence of violence manifesting itself against this growing European penetration, whereas Nablus, for example, did witness popular unrest and resentment.[39] One would have expected the arrival of Christian settlers and the drive of the Anglican Church to convert Jews to Christianity, by encouraging their return to the Holy Land, to raise the tension in Jerusalem. However, whereas for instance in Damascus anti-Christian riots had broken out in 1848 in reaction to

the European consuls' policies and attitudes, nothing on the same scale is reported to have taken place in Jerusalem. This may have been because, apart from the American consul who used to irritate the authorities and segments of the population by waving high his country's flag, consuls in Jerusalem were given less rein by their governments.[40] Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century British consuls reported only a few cases where they thought foreigners were in danger. They did, however, blame the *ulama*, the Husaynis' *muftis* among them, for inciting the population against the Christians in the city.[41] At the same time, whereas the religious branch of the family resented the foreign presence, the secular branch cultivated cordial relationship with some of the visitors. What function a notable held determined to a large extent his position vis-à-vis the newcomers. As we shall see, this was also true in the case of the family's relations with Zionists.

A good place to look if we want to know to what extent the Husaynis may have been involved in inciting xenophobic attitudes are the Nabi Musa festivities. The supervision and organization of this important festival – whereby Muslims went in procession from Jerusalem to what is believed to be Moses' tomb near Jericho there to stay for three days of celebrations – had been entrusted to the Husaynis ever since the eighteenth century, probably even earlier. Already at the end of the nineteenth century, the Nabi Musa ceremony had become a vehicle for protest of the Muslim public against the anti-Muslim changes in Jerusalem, particularly against the meddling of the consuls in not just minor but also major matters concerning the community's affairs. Quite often, the festival coincided with Easter, which would become all the more significant as the volume of Christian pilgrimage to the city increased.

Yehoshua Ben-Aryeh claims that the Jerusalemite governor, Ra#uf Pasha (1876–88), had been the first to encourage the Muslims to use Nabi Musa as an anti-Christian event.[42] It is more likely, however, that the governor and his government were rather apprehensive of any such outbreak of anti-Christian sentiment as it was sure to have caused instability and disorder at a time when the Ottoman government was making great efforts to ensure peace and calm in the empire. This indeed had been the impression of the engineer (and founder of the Palestine Exploration Fund), Claude Conder.[43] The Hebrew paper, *Hehavazelet*, at the time congratulated the Ottoman government for imposing law and order during the Nabi Musa

festival.[44] The travelogues of Francis Newton testify as well to the peaceful unfolding of the ceremonies.[45] Indeed, the Ottoman government must have acted here against the grain of popular feeling, evoking resentment that was shared by the *muftis* among the Husaynis, who had always been the masters of the ceremony. Thus it was the iron fist policy of the Turks that prevented Nabi Musa at this point in time from becoming what it would become during the mandatory era, a stage for the violent manifestation of local patriotism.[46]

The principal source of friction between foreigners and local leaders was to be the land issue, not in the scope and intensity it would assume during the mandatory period, but in Jerusalem in particular it was quite significant and led to high tensions in the city as well as in its surroundings.

The struggle to keep the land Muslim ended in failure – the consequence, it may be said, of the logic behind the 'politics of notables'. Although we do not think that the Husaynis, or any of the other notable families, invested much effort in this struggle, it is illuminating to follow this episode more closely for the way the Husaynis adapted to the new reality, especially as land was to become such a crucial issue in the mandatory period.

Foreign purchase of land was authorized by the reformers in Istanbul in 1858, but we already have evidence of such purchases in Jerusalem in 1850. One of the 'pioneers' in this field was James Finn. His reasons were quite mundane: he found it difficult to function in the small house he at first occupied within the city's walls where 'there was no room for the servants'. He had set his eyes on a plot of land in Beit Safafa but encountered immediate opposition from the 'effendis of the city'. The notables threatened anyone willing to sell land to Finn with boycott and if need be arrest because it meant a violation of the law. No other consul in Jerusalem was ever resented or acted against in such a fierce manner. Finn, as a typical 'Orientalist', did not grant the 'effendis' a will of their own and reported to London that the Greek–Russian Archihegumen Nikofors was behind this opposition as he wanted to secure land for his church which, as an Ottoman citizen, he could buy freely. Finn claimed that Nikofors had bribed the notables. Finn was particularly Russophobic in those days and saw even a parade of no more than fifty Russian navy men in the city as the ominous sign of an immanent Russian invasion.[47] Finn alarmed his government with anxious reports of a scheme by Russian

and Greek Orthodox churches to surround Jerusalem with plots of agricultural land as part of a general plan to take over the city. In his dispatches to London he reported rumours, which he found substantiated, that every serviceman in Russia was setting aside a portion from his annual salary in support of this land purchase campaign.

Russia had other concerns in the 1850s, but much like other powers, it did encourage the purchase of land in Jerusalem for religious and economic purposes. Economically this scramble for land benefited local landowners, the Husaynis among them, who gladly sold superfluous tracts, thereby unintentionally intensifying foreign intervention. Whether they agreed or refused to sell land seemed to depend on the personalities of the foreigners who wanted to buy the land, rather than the latter's country of origin. The Husaynis selected their business partners according to individual rather than national dislikes.[48] The 'politics of notables' demanded that the Husaynis held on to their mediating role between government and society and in the 1850s it also meant strengthening the family's financial basis. Land was not perceived by the Husaynis as a 'national asset', nor was there, in the city or in the countryside, any form of collective solidarity between landowners. Retaining in the family the position of *mufti* and later mayor and reaching the higher echelons of the Ottoman administration were the Husaynis' main concerns. In this context, the struggle against land purchases by Europeans was a struggle over control of power in the city, not over land sovereignty which anyway was recognized by all to lie with Istanbul.

From the point of view of Palestinian historiography it is ironical that the only person who tried to organize the city notables into acting against Europeans buying up land was the local Turkish governor in the 1850s. Motivated by a personal dislike of Finn, he had started a campaign against the purchase of land by Europeans in general but by Finn in particular. The governor warned a full forum of the notables' council that if Finn gained a foothold this would lead to a wholesale takeover similar to the one the British had perpetrated in India: 'First there came a street sweeper earning a few *paras*: he inhabited an old sepulchre; then built a dome over it; then added a chamber; then wrote home to his government, who sent others; and so at last the English conquered India.'[49] To us this will sound more reminiscent of the Christian takeover of the Holy Sepulchre, though it is quite adequate,

of course, as a description of the way India became British. If we are to believe Finn, some of the notables failed to see the wisdom behind the governor's behaviour and the meeting in fact ended with the governor angrily sending off some of the notables.

The scope and pace of land purchase naturally increased after the land law of 1858 made such transactions legal. But even after the law was put into effect it was difficult for foreigners to purchase land without the governor's and the local council's approval.[50] For the local society and its leaders the land law was beneficial in the short run, but was to have grave adverse consequences in the long run. We assume that it was not, at the time, one of the family's main concerns. The law was part of a set of new codes and rules which were invented by the enthusiastic reformers in Istanbul during the Tanzimat period, a new game the rules of which all actors on the Jerusalem stage would soon be forced to abide by.

The Family and the Tanzimat

Contemporary historiography has gradually been discarding the concept of modernization for the way it epitomizes 'cultural essentialism', an air of contempt and above all a neo-colonialist perception of the 'other'. This writer shares most of the criticism entailed in this shift, and, following the suggestions of Sami Zubaida and others, prefers to use the terms development and change instead. However, the sociological approach to change and development which lay at the basis of most modernization theories is still helpful when one wants to sketch the structural and organizational changes non-Western societies underwent when coming into contact with the political and economic might of Europe during the nineteenth century. These structural and organizational changes were, in a way, 'modernization from above', a rapid movement of change irrespective of the development of the society 'from below'. At the core of this change stood an institutional transformation aimed at centralizing power in a modern state. For sociopolitical groups such as the Husaynis these changes meant customising the 'politics of notables' to the new arenas and power centres that were opening up for them through the reforms instigated by Istanbul.

Whereas up to the Crimean war the family occupied for most of the time the three traditional power bases –*mashyakhat al-Haram*, *niqabat al-ashraf* and the *ifta'* – as a result of the Tanzimat there was

a new bastion to be conquered, the *baladiyya*, or town council. Part of the overall effort of the Sultan, Abdülaziz II, to build a modern centralized state, following the French model, a municipality was first established in Jerusalem in 1863. The Husaynis were to hold the position of mayor almost without interruption until the end of Ottoman rule in Palestine, fortifying the family's dominance in the local arena until the beginning of the mandatory era. In fact, the mayorship and the *ifta'* the main reasons for British trust in the Husaynis, that is they were left in power, and not, as sometimes argued by Israeli scholars, brought into power by the British.

It took more than just noble genealogy, religious piety and good connections in Istanbul to gain control over this new structure – it was necessary to secure the goodwill of electors. Some of the electors were Jews, a reality interesting for the intricate relationship it generated between Jews and the family.

If new tactics were needed, at least the rivals were quite familiar – the Khalidis. And it sometimes happened that the Khalidis succeeded in getting the upper hand, as was the case in 1898 when they took the post with the help of the Jewish vote. Holding the mayorship meant, of course, that an array of positions could be secured for many junior members of the triumphant family. Competition was not too harsh and actually quite fair. Haim Gerber convincingly remarks that since this was the beginning of new developments, optimism and openness were still intact.[51]

The Husaynis held the mayorship without interruption for the first two decades of the twentieth century. The last to serve as mayor of Jerusalem before the First World War was Husayn Salim al-Husayni, who inherited the post in 1910 from his father and his stepbrothers, Abd al-Salih and Sa'id, who had alternated in the post since 1900.[52] Sa'id was also elected as a representative to parliament. By adding the parliamentary seat of Jerusalem to the family – another new power centre – Sa'id personified the ability of the family to adapt to the new reality created by the Ottoman reforms. New institutions were filled with old contents and the continuity safeguarded the family's position as long as the Ottoman world was intact.

That the family successfully adapted itself to the new political reality did not mean that it sided with the Tanzimat. The Husaynis are on record as having opposed the process from its beginnings in 1839, unlike, for example, the Khalidis, who supported the reforms

and hence were granted a dominant role by the authorities in the 1840s and early 1850s in the power bases of the city. For a while, certainly for as long as they retained their strong ties with the rebellious Abu Ghosh clan, the antagonistic attitude of the Husaynis did much to erode their position in the city where they had to give up such positions as the *ifta'* and *mashyakhat al-Haram*.

But the lean years were soon over and the family's fortunes improved again in the aftermath of the Crimean war. A first indication of this came in 1856 when the Husaynis returned to the *ifta'*. When the *mufti* Fadhal Abdullah Jarallah died in that year, he was replaced by Mustafa al-Husayni, the grandfather of Hajj Amin. This change in their fortunes was due to the good relationship they had cultivated with the Ottoman governor of Damascus but also, probably more importantly, to the strong ties the family maintained with the Jarallahs. Mustafa al-Husayni became *mufti* after the family had been absent from the post for an interval of about fifteen years. He remained in office until 1893 and his son, Shaykh Tahir (Tahir II, to distinguish him from Tahir I, *mufti* in the city during Muhammad Ali's reign) replaced him. Kamil, Mustafa's son by his first wife Mahbuba, replaced his father in 1908, and Amin, his son by his second wife Zaynab, became grand mufti after the British occupation in 1921.

The pragmatism entailed in the 'politics of notables' enabled the Husaynis to cope more easily with the main thrust of the Tanzimat, the centralization policy which inherently threatened such intermediary functionaries as the class of Arab urban notables throughout the empire. Antagonism was turned into first acquiescence and eventually support for the new era and the spirit it ushered in.[53]

Once the Husaynis had dissociated themselves from the rural lords, they discovered the benefits of a tighter regime: centralization not only clipped the wings of the rural lords, it also crippled the power of the regional capital, Damascus. The decline in Damascus' fortunes came to benefit to a large extent those living in Jerusalem. More concretely, with the administrative reforms the status of the city was upgraded and, in 1872, it became the centre of an autonomous *sanjaq*. Abu Ghosh and the other *mashayikh* of the mountains were now no longer a credible social or political force – the only members of the local elite to partake in the enlarged political outfit offered to them by Ottoman reforms were the urban notable families.[54]

The creation of the autonomous *sanjaq* was the zenith of the

centralization efforts in the area. Whereas some scholars have attributed the creation of the *sanjaq* to foreign pressure alone, Butrus Abu Maneh sees it as an internal Ottoman decision meant to strengthen the Porte's control in Jerusalem.[55] The immediate reason for this renewed interest in Jerusalem's position was an Ottoman attempt to counterbalance the loss of Mecca and Medina which had been conquered by the Wahabiyya.[56]

As already mentioned, the new *sanjaq* transformed Palestine into a more clearly defined geopolitical unit. The rise in importance of the northern port of Haifa had already weakened the dependence of Palestine on Beirut for its imports and exports, creating the embryo of a self-sufficient political unit. In the minds of some *a'yan* this self-sufficiency would then call up an imaginary Palestine – a Palestine that was to materialize only as part of a national struggle for self-determination. And indeed, the first claims to turn this vision into reality were heard soon after the autonomous *sanjaq* had been formed. But a more cataclysmic force was necessary to accelerate the emergence of a clear national consciousness. This was provided, so to speak, by the 'Young Turks' revolution.

Coping with a New World – From the 'Politics of Notables' to the 'Politics of Nationalism'

Historians such as Bernard Lewis have described the 1908 revolution as the end of a night of despotism and the dawn of a new Turkey.[57] It may seem so to them, in hindsight, but for the Husaynis 1908 was a coup d'état and not a revolution. This is probably why they adapted with relative ease – employing the traditional code of the 'politics of notables' – to what was now a secular state. Viewed from Jerusalem, the despotism of the new rulers of Istanbul was no better than that of Hamidian regime. The main difference was that their despotism was secular and thus eroded the Islamic legitimacy of the state. It meant that new challenges faced the Husaynis in serving both the new regime and their community. In order to survive as a leading sociopolitical force not only in the city but now, too, in the *sanjaq*, the family had to navigate even more carefully between the growing local resentment the new rulers evoked and the religious indifference the government displayed. The older generation remained loyal to the powers that be, while the younger one was captivated by the new spirit of nationalism which appealed to the upper echelons of the local society. This division

helped the family to hold on to its positions and remain the most respected family in the city when the British occupied Jerusalem in 1917. This was a genuine, and not a tactical, division of the ranks and it set in only when the new rulers turned anti-Arab in their attitudes and policies.

The 'Young Turks' revolution went through two major phases in its relationship with the Arab peoples. The first was amiable but short, lasting for only the first year of the revolution. The second, antagonistic in character, was marked by a constant linear deterioration in the relationship between Istanbul and its Arab provinces. In the first year, however, Jerusalem responded, from above and below, with what seemed to be genuine enthusiasm for the new regime and relief over the fall of the Hamidian police state.[58] The popular demonstrations in the streets during the first months of the revolution were partly staged and partly spontaneous. The young Husaynis, those who were then in their teens, remember that as school children they were recruited to participate in the ceremonies welcoming the new regime (Tawfiq and Hilmi, the sons of Musa Qasim, of the Tahiri branch, took part in a street theatre that celebrated the new dawn).[59]

Since they held the most prominent positions in the city, the elders of the family could hardly avoid participating in the official ceremonial welcome given to the new rule. It is difficult to reconstruct or, as Collingwood would have it, re-enact the feelings of the old generation. Were they disappointed when they learned that the main official event in Palestine was to take place in Jaffa, or were they relieved that they, who had been so loyal to the House of Osman, were not in the limelight now that the country celebrated its fall? Salim al-Husayni, as mayor, gathered his officials together under the heavy framed logo of the new party, the Committee of Union and Progress, promising to serve the new regime.[60] This was the official *bay'a* (an oath of allegiance to the caliph in medieval times) to the secular regime. It signalled that the family considered business to be as usual, but one can only guess at their deeper feelings with regard to the end of the Ottoman period, or whether they at all realized at the time that this was indeed the end of an era.

We can get some idea perhaps by reading what the Husaynis themselves must have been reading at the time, the locally available newspapers – going through the newspapers was a common pastime in the houses of the notables in Jerusalem. The Egyptian and Beiruti

presses were widely read, and even newspapers printed by the Arab exiles in the United States were quite accessible. Each paper somehow had its own drawback: the Beirutis were not very informative on events in Istanbul, while the Arabic press from Istanbul, particularly *al-Mufid*, did show little interest in the world outside the Ottoman Empire.[61]

The contemporary press does not reveal any substantial discussions or arguments among the Arab elite. But the actual positions taken up within the family as the first years of the coup passed and the second, more hostile stage in the Turco–Arab relationship developed, indicate dissension from the very start. One of the main reasons was that for the very first time in Arab–Ottoman history there was an option of opposition, or rather an alternative to Ottoman rule, in the form of Arab nationalism. This notion of independence, which had its beginnings in Egypt's autonomous existence since 1805, was then brought home by the Greek example of 1821 and spread with the ideas of nationalism throughout the Levant as of the 1870s. The option of, on the one hand, an anti-Turkish nationalism and on the other hand continuing to cooperate with the new regime soon stretched the 'politics of notables' to the limits. These were by all accounts most difficult times for the family.

Within ten days of the coup one section of the Husaynis sided with revolution. It was led by Shuqri al-Husayni, brother of the head of the family, Isma'il. As Isma'il's brother, it was in a way natural for Shuqri to take such a stand – Isma'il had reached the highest official positions an Arab could ever hope to reach in the Ottoman administration. Shuqri was also quite important in his own right.[62] He had been chief accountant in the ministry of education in Istanbul for many years (1888–1907) and held the prestigious title of pasha. It was Shuqri who conducted the pro-revolutionary festivities in the city, using his brother's name and standing for that purpose.[63] As Khalil al-Sakakini noted in his diary, these festivities were the first ever Muslim–Christian demonstrations of solidarity in the city, which meant that, inadvertently, the pro-Turkish feelings helped cement Arab nationalism.

This paradoxical development was manifested in another of Shuqri's activities. He was one of the founders of an Arab–Ottoman solidarity group,[64] one which would become, again inadvertently, the first national organization in Jerusalem to oppose Turkish rule. Although Shuqri himself would remain loyal to the Young Turks and

could not so easily be 'Arabized', he was nonetheless to die as an Arab martyr. Only after it had become abundantly clear that the Young Turks were determined to Turkify all the Arabs in the Empire did this ardent believer in Arab–Ottomanism abandon his loyalty to Istanbul. Jailed by Jamal Pasha at the beginning of the First World War, Shuqri died in Hamat on his the way to a military trial in Aley which would quite probably have condemned him to death.[65]

Arab historiography, in the nature of national historiographies, tends to regard the solidarity organization, and even Shuqri himself, as pure precursors of Arab nationalism. As Benedict Anderson has remarked, national history indiscriminately nationalizes every event and person in what it considers to be its history. The Arab–Ottoman group was at the end of the day a proto-national formation, but its founder wished it to be something else.[66] For Shuqri it was a channel by which to integrate the family and the society into the new political order – a tactical move that came naturally to someone brought up on the 'politics of notables'. Indeed, the solidarity group was soon called the Party of Arab–Ottoman Brotherhood and was in effect a branch of the ruling party, the Committee of Union and Progress. Some argue that the 'Ottoman' was included in the union's title so as to pre-empt the Young Turks' wrath, and yet one may accept that Shuqri and his friends were genuinely taken by the new revolutionary ideas. Probably it was indeed, as the union's platform stated, a genuine effort to preserve Arab culture within the political Turkish structure. This platform was concise and simple enough: accepting the Ottoman constitution of 1876, adhering to the principle of Ottoman territorial integrity, calling for the improvement of economic and social conditions in the Arab provinces on an equal basis with the rest of the empire's peoples and, finally, extending Arabic education in the Arab provinces.[67]

In fact, in 1908, Shuqri al-Husayni's major concern was the fate of the Ottoman Empire, not that of Palestine. He spent much of his time organizing petitions and demonstrations in Jerusalem in support of the empire against its enemies in the Balkans. The population of Jerusalem was asked to send petitions against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria (the Austrians had exploited the confusion in Istanbul during the first months of the revolution to annex these areas). The petitions were sent to the Austrian consul. Moreover fashionable tarbushes, of Austrian make, which were most popular among the notables, were boycotted to show Jerusalem's discontent.

This whole campaign was organized by the local branch of the Committee of Union and Progress. The continuing losses in the Balkans, which now extended to Montenegro, and the expansion of Greece were received in a similar manner.[68]

For one brief moment in the winter of 1908 it seemed as if Shuqri al-Husayni would succeed in steering the family into a cooperative course with the new regime, and hence adaptation to the new world created by the Young Turks, by actively spurring the family to participate in parliamentary life. One of the first steps of the Young Turks had been to reinstate the suspended constitution of 1876. New orders were issued for an election whereby each *mutasarrifiyya* with 50,000 inhabitants would send one representative in the new parliament. This meant that the *sanjaq* of Jerusalem was offered three seats. Any man above 25 voted for a group of electors who in turn chose the three delegates. Ruhi al-Nashashibi was voted in together with two Husaynis (Sa'id and Salim) who would rotate, with a representative of Jaffa from the al-Dajani family completing the trio.[69]

As we mentioned, Shuqri's most impressive success was enlisting Isma'il's support for the Arab–Ottoman initiative. This was not an easy task given Isma'il's reputation as one of the most loyal subjects of the Hamidian regime. He must have felt less confident than Shuqri about the new changes and quite apprehensive about his own fate. The new regime in Istanbul had begun purging all those it suspected of having been among the last sultan's confidants and agents. It also claimed that quite a few of Palestine's notables had maintained strong contacts with the Hafiyye, the sultan's secret police. But, as we learn from Izzat Darwazah, it was the notables of Nablus who were the principal suspects, not those of Jerusalem,[70] and thus only when these apprehensions were allayed did Isma'il give his blessing to the new organization.

What turned Isma'il around was the enthusiasm one of his close friends, Ghalib al-Khalidi, showed for the idea. Ghalib, a leading dignitary in the city, furthermore occupied a special status since it was he and not, as expected, Ra'uf Pasha, the governor, who had informed the people of Jerusalem about the revolution. The governor's antagonistic relationship with the notables had led him to assume, erroneously, that the announcement would create a rebellious mood among the city's notables. Ghalib was a distinguished member of the regional court and of the educational council headed by Isma'il.[71]

But Shuqri, Gahlib and Isma'il were soon to find out that their admiration for the idea of Arab–Ottomanism was not reciprocated by the government in Istanbul. Domestic unrest, instigated by followers of the former sultan, and several successive national uprisings led the triumvirate who took over the leadership from the early, more liberal, coalition of the Young Turks, to a firm Turkification policy. Arab intellectuals, including members of the Arab–Ottoman solidarity groups, now had to make a choice. On 23 August 1909 the Turkish government published a decree prohibiting the establishment of political groups based on ethnic or national identity or carrying a name to such an effect. The term 'Ottoman' was also erased and replaced by 'Turkish' as the only valid term allowed. Many Arab activists decided to opt for Arab identity and organized themselves in secret national societies that would become the basis for the development of the pan-Arabist national idea.

But it took more than the anti-Arab policy of the Young Turks or the youthful enthusiasm of the Arab activists to breathe life into the embryo of the national movement. Ever since George Antonius published his monumental *The Arab Awakening*, it is commonplace to attribute to the American missionaries the role of modernization agents transmitting the concept of modern nationalism from its birthplace in America to the Arab world. This theory is probably still valid today. However, in the case of the young generation of the Husaynis it was the Arab–Christian teachers who 'nationalized' the family. Three names in particular come to mind: Khalil al-Sakakini, Zurayk Nahleh and Khalil Bayda. These three men influenced a whole generation of young Muslims and Christians in Palestine. The most prominent among them was the Lebanese Nahleh, an Anglican who was head of the English College on Mt Zion and educated the Husaynis' youth from the end of the Hamidian period. He held a colloquium for modern Arabic at his home and is rightly considered as one of the greatest scholars of the Arabic language in our century.

A particular bond was struck with al-Sakakini, who was himself a student of Nahleh.[72] Al-Sakakini's educational career and biography fits every known model of 'modernization', which requires an agent to pass ideas from one culture to another. After the 1908 revolution he started the 'national constitutional school' where he wanted to cultivate Arabic language and heritage. While working intensively and enthusiastically for the Orthodox Church, he also entertained

wider loyalties to the idea of a Palestinian nation.

After the revolution the family's ties with these three teachers grew stronger. Nakhleh and al-Sakakini had great respect for Mayor Salim al-Husayni, and they taught all his children.[73] Salim and the two teachers discussed in the autumn of 1908 the new concept of a Muslim–Christian association that was to form the basis for Palestinian nationalism in the early years of the British Mandate. The three Christian teachers must have sensed that this secular branch of the family would not join some of the *ulama* of Jerusalem, among them other Husaynis, who wished to create an Arab national society on a purely Muslim basis.

Another factor contributing to the development of a national consciousness was a transformation in the inter-family relationships in the city. We already mentioned the close relationship that existed between Ghalib al-Khalidi and Isma'il al-Husayni. It was an indication of new alliances in the city that would form the basis of what one may call the 'politics of nationalism'. Ever since Ghalib had been appointed to the educational council, under Isma'il's chairmanship, the Khalidis and the Husaynis had moved closer to each other. Former arch-rivals (the Husaynis leading the Yaman and the Khalidis the Qays faction) they were the two most important families in the city. The hatchets were buried now and, with the past forgotten, they set out to form a new partnership, which was to stand them in good stead throughout the mandatory period.

For this 'politics of nationalism' to be successful it was not enough to have these two families, important as they were, unite. A wider coalition of families was needed, one that would willingly accept some form of hegemony and hierarchy. Such a politics of nationalism, however, never achieved wide acceptance, something which serves as one but by no means the only explanation for the fragility of the Palestinian national movement during the mandatory years. When the Nashashibis dissented and decided to form their own coalition, the basis of the whole national movement already became shakier. The Husaynis for their part never really accepted the role of *primus inter pares* and strove to concentrate the political, and above all the financial, power in the hands of the family. This, of course, prevented an aspiring family such as the Nashashibis, except for the very early stages of the national history, from giving their cooperation to the new coalition.

But even if the early seeds of nationalism were planted with relative ease in the Husayni's political field, this did not occur, as noted, without causing some dissent within the family. The divide was mainly a generational one. If Shuqri al-Husayni represented the tendency of the elders to go along with the powers that be, his nephew Jamil al-Husayni, represented the younger, more recalcitrant one.

Jamil, with many other members of his generation, was in Istanbul as a student when the revolution broke out, and it was they, as Arab students of higher education institutions in Istanbul, who were the first to raise the banner of nationalism and challenge the idea of Arab–Ottoman solidarity. In their enthusiasm students took it upon themselves to build a network of branches throughout the Arab provinces promoting the idea of Arab nationalism or, at least, solidarity against the Turkification policy. This antagonism was not just nationalist, it was also democratic, as it based the Arab demands for equality on the demographic majority the Arabs enjoyed in the Ottoman Empire (the Arabs constituted roughly two thirds of the overall population).

Jamil was induced to join this new effort by Abd al-Karim al-Khalil, an Arab intellectual who in 1909 had founded the secret organization, al-Fatah, 'the Arab Youth', a society which acted behind the front of the famous al-Mundata al-Adabi (the 'Arab Literary Club') in the capital. Al-Mundata was ostensibly a cultural club where literature and poetry were discussed and read, activities allowed by the Turks. Jamil was one of the club's first members and immediately joined its secret activity.[74] Al-Fatah was the first group calling for the liberation of the Arab provinces from Turkish rule. For some reason, the secret police never succeeded in exposing their activities. When he returned to Palestine, Jamil brought with him this same structure of public and secret organization and activity.

Sa'id al-Husayni was probably the only one among the middle generation who fully supported the younger one. According to one testimony it was in his home that the returning young Husaynis were gathering with other youth to consider their next steps as members of the new nationalist movement.[75] Sa'id soon joined and became an active member of the Fatah group, putting himself in direct opposition and resistance to the government in Istanbul.[76]

The 'politics of notables', however, required a middle ground between opposition and surrender. Its proven tactics are best

manifested by the behaviour of Musa Kazim, another member of the 'secular branch', which had held the *niqaba* and then substituted it with the *baladiyya*. Musa Kazim had a brilliant career in the provincial Turkish administration. He was *mutassarif* of Hawran and later of Muntafiq in Iraq.[77] Up to the outbreak of the First World War, he supported, albeit not very enthusiastically, the positions of Shuqri and Isma'il, who belonged to the same branch. Nevertheless, it is difficult to describe him as a conservative. After all, to side with the Young Turks was to side with development and modernization which could revolutionize the lives of notables such as himself. He was more exposed to the *raison d'être* behind secularization, and had been inspired by the Young Turks' desire to build a modern society. After the war, he was to embrace nationalism wholeheartedly and also replace Isma'il as head of the family.

The opposing views of Sa'id and Shuqri towards Istanbul's policy led them to different stands vis-à-vis the British involvement in the Middle East and Palestine. Shuqri supported enthusiastically the anti-British sentiments of Egyptian nationalism, and one may assume that the chimeric politics of Mustafa Kamil enabled Shuqri to view the latter as a pro-Turkish activist. Sa'id, on the other hand, was an Anglophile who spoke impeccable English (which he had learned in the American Colony in Jerusalem), and he saw the British as potential allies of Arab nationalism, as indeed would many other leading activists in the pan-Arabist movement.

While we know a little of the elders' attitude to Europe, it is difficult to reconstruct the attitude to the 'West' of the young Husaynis. Izzat Tanus, peer and co-pupil of many of the Husaynis in St George School, where he became a young teacher in 1911, makes obvious in his candid memoir that any clear-cut analysis would miss the complexity of their attitude.[78] If education is a yardstick to measure Western influence, by then the youngsters were receiving a 'European education'. The school curriculum towards the end of Turkish rule was European and well received by the more industrious students. And if parental or domestic socialization is a gauge for determining the 'Westerness' of their educational background, then the positive attitudes found in these youngsters must be connected with the level of national consciousness shown by their parents – the higher this level, the more sympathetic to the West they were; the more Ottomanist among parents brought up their children in an anti-European mood.

One of the youngest members of the family in those days already had clear views on the West and on politics in general, while his peers in school were barely politicized and were impressed mainly by one particular Western import and for this had only praise – football.[79] The youth, Muhammad Amin, did not join their football games but proved quite seclusive and, keeping to himself, spent his time reading about politics and religion. Nobody paid any particular attention to this young, somewhat ascetic Husayni except for his mother, Zaynab, who took a keen interest in the boy's career. When he expressed his wish to pursue a political career in Istanbul, Zaynab convinced Amin's elder half-brother, Kamil, to dissuade him from taking this course. Kamil, who held the *ifta'*, must have realized that if Amin went and studied theology he could become a possible candidate for the post after his own death, and he agreed to direct Amin towards a more religious career. Ironically, religion was to turn Amin into a politician *pur sang*. Thus with his brother's blessing, Zaynab took her son on a *hajj* to Mecca, in 1913, and then sent him to al-Azhar to study under the guidance of the great Rashid Rida in Dar al-Da'wa and Irsha'.[80]

Amin was sent off to Cairo together with his cousin, Ya'qub, and studied theology and Arabic there. He spent long evenings in Rida's house.[81] He also went to evening classes in Kuliyat al-Adab at al-Azhar. He was deeply impressed by Rida's call for the integration of Arab nationalism and Islam as the only potent force against the West. But he also discovered in Cairo how complex the impact of the West was on the reality of the Arab world. As Hourani has noted, Rida, like his mentor, Muhammad Abduh, did not confuse antagonism towards Western policy with hatred for Western culture. Rida taught the young Amin the importance of Western technological achievements and political systems.[82] Under Rida's influence, Amin established his first Palestinian national organization. With his room mate, Abd al-Rahman al-Alami, he brought together about twenty Christians and Muslims for the purpose of awakening national consciousness against Zionism,[83] but the society disintegrated as war broke out.

It seems that each member of the Husayni family absorbed and digested the European influence in a different manner and with different consequences. Much depended on the age of each individual and the place they happened to be in during the dramatic period between the coup of 1908 and the outbreak of the war in 1914. Young

members of the family had found their way to a number of power centres in the Ottoman Empire where they were exposed to the new Ottoman thought and methods, as well as to Western ideas and customs. In these places, the new concepts were internalized, absorbed, digested and then articulated in a local version, a process which facilitated the relatively calm transition of the family into the new and dramatic phase of the British occupation.

Amin's cousin, Jamal al-Husayni, a high-profile Palestinian leader during the mandatory period, spent his formative years as a medical student in the Protestant College of Beirut. Here he was exposed not only to medical expertise but also to nationalist ideologues such as Butrus al-Bustani and Nasif al-Yasji, who were on the Colleges' staff. As almost all of his teachers were either American or Canadian and only very few were Arab, Jamal was probably more exposed than anyone else in the family to Western influence.[84]

Beirut also provided an inspiration for the more intellectually inclined among the Husaynis such as Ishaq Musa al-Husayni. Ishaq Musa was much taken by the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city which proved an ideal surrounding for an autodidact like himself. Immersing himself in reading and contemplation, he chose the intellectual route to the changing world of the future – at the expense of the cohesiveness of the family because this Husayni found himself soon enough beyond the boundaries of the Middle East.

But it was not necessary for the younger Husaynis to leave Jerusalem in order to play a role in helping the family retain its position and stature in the changing world of the Middle East. A prosopographic view of the young generation reveals a local education which provided knowledge in European languages and culture and a childhood spent in a neighbourhood where consuls, missionaries, and Christian friends were regular visitors to the family's mansion.

The elder generation, too, became attracted to European ideas and influence, but, unlike the younger one, with them this would not lead to the espousal of the politics of nationalism. In this respect Isma'il's attitude is a good example. Isma'il had been responsible for the transformation, namely, the Westernization, of the educational system in Jerusalem, but he showed no interest in nationalist education, and gradually withdrew from politics, also during the mandatory period. Others in the family who under the Ottoman system had enjoyed a prestigious career followed suit. For example, Salim al-Husayni,

Jerusalem's mayor before and during the war, never became a 'national' mayor but remained very much a 'municipal' one until his death in 1918.

In the final analysis we can say that most of the Husaynis, cognitively as well as emotionally, were neither anti-Western nor overly charmed by nationalism. They 'tackled' nationalism as they had 'tackled' the consuls, the reforms and the Young Turks. Nationalism was a phenomenon that at the very beginning did not bring them economic and financial benefits and thus offered little to entice them; nor did it in any obvious way threaten them or their privileged position in the Ottoman world. Arab nationalism, at least in Palestine, contained no socialist or communist message. Like all other political codes, nationalism was an elite game and as such controlled by the notables.

Being aware, however, of the unprecedented hostile and anti-Arab attitude of the Turkish government, particularly in the months leading up to the outbreak of the Great War, the family as a unit adopted a neutral position vis-à-vis the coming battle over Palestine. They did not spy for the Allies, nor did they join the pro-Turkish Syrian organization established by Jamal Pasha, not even when the invitation to do so was accompanied by threats from a governor who was known for his brutal treatment of Arab notables who decided to stand up to him and reject his proposals.[85]

It was the younger generation who were more enthusiastic about nationalism and who directly enjoyed the mixed blessing of the foreign and secular education provided by the new Turkish regime. As students they were more easily captivated by the radical and intriguing world of Arab nationalism. It was mainly the Husayni students in Istanbul who, like younger people everywhere at the time, were drawn into the whirlwind of this new and gripping global idea of national identity, and who then translated, or rather localized it in the face of, first the Turkish and then the British reality.

And it was the young generation who ensured for the Husaynis a leading role in the national movement. The rest of the family would join forces with them only after the First World War had brought an end to both Turkish rule and the Ottoman world as they had known them. Because of the relatively late entrance of the family as a whole into the business of nationalism, they found themselves quite unprepared, not to say handicapped, vis-à-vis the vigorous combination

of nationalism and colonialism that confronted them in the Zionists.

The Demise of the 'Politics of Notables' – Facing the Zionist Challenge

The first waves of Zionist immigrants to Palestine were perceived and treated by the local population as yet another group of European settlers coveting the land for religious reasons. The majority of these immigrants were Austrian, Russian or even Americans citizens, and as such protected by the consuls of their respective countries of origin, and it is therefore understandable why they were viewed by the local population as part of the European scramble for land and power in Jerusalem.

But within a few years it was apparent that here was an ideological movement endeavouring to bring to Palestine, and particularly to Jerusalem, as many Jews as possible. This made the local leadership oppose the new movement and, in the 1880s, call upon the Ottoman government to act against it. It seems, however, that the Ottoman government had been aware of Zionist plans to settle in Ottoman Palestine even prior to the arrival of the first Jewish settlers and did not have to be prodded into action by the local leadership. Already in 1882 it issued a decree prohibiting Jewish immigration into the country. But it soon eased its opposition due to European pressure. Indeed, it was the European consuls who facilitated the continuation of a steady flow of Jews into Jerusalem, despite Istanbul's antagonistic attitude (though, in general, the Austrian consul proved less helpful). Thus, by 1891, small groups of Jews were allowed to stay in Palestine for up to a year, while for larger groups it remained prohibited to enter the land.[86]

But local resentment grew and the pendulum swung once more in the other direction. By the turn of the century, Istanbul revised its policy and requested steam liner companies to cooperate in preventing Jewish immigration.[87] That same year a new law stipulated that any Jew staying more than three months was to be expelled. Istanbul's restrictions on Jewish immigration did not function well in the case of British Jews as their passports did not mention their Jewish origin.[88] Furthermore, the British consuls in the area were most reluctant to expel British subjects of any origin.

How much did these developments concern the Husaynis? Zionism certainly seems to have occupied the family's agenda, since the

Husaynis had interests to protect that extended beyond the family's sphere. Its social standing demanded some sort of public reaction towards this new and unprecedented foreign desire to settle in Jerusalem and Palestine. The family's political and social status relied on maintaining the Muslim or, at least, Arab nature of Jerusalem itself and of Palestine as a whole. Less cynical and more protagonist historians will talk about concern for the fate of the society or the nation. But, the 'nation' as such was of no concern to most of the Husaynis up to 1908 and Zionism, till then, was only a minor irritation.

The position each member of the family took up, again, was dictated by his function in society; hence the *mufti* appeared the most hostile in his attitude as he was constantly asked for an official reaction to Jewish immigration. Other Husaynis hardly ever came across Zionists in their daily business or work before 1908.

It was the awakening of the national consciousness after the 1908 coup that sharpened local sensitivity about Zionism, and the family as a whole began to see the potential danger inherent in the new movement. But another nine years were to elapse before Zionism was perceived in the manner more familiar from later Palestinian political thought, i.e. as a purely colonialist movement which had its base in European imperialism. Meanwhile, it was the sheer numbers of Jews who came over, bought land and settled on it, that alerted the family. After the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, official pamphlets began to describe the movement – as indeed it would be viewed from then on by Palestinian eyes – as a force determined to wrest Palestine from the Palestinians.

But around 1908, not only none of the people involved in the Zionist movement itself but neither any of those opposing it knew how it would develop and what would turn out to be its 'real essence'. At the time it was perceived as an integral part of the other European colonization efforts in Palestine which had tried to achieve their ambitions by economic penetration or by agricultural settlements, the most successful of which till then were the Templars.

Much as the Zionists themselves, the Husaynis were as yet unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality. When one reads about such colourful fakes as the self-proclaimed prince Immanuel, who had come to Jerusalem in July 1904 to enthrone himself as the new leader of the Jews, it is understandable why some treated Herzl in a similar way.[89] Inevitably however, some people did take such bizarre

scenes seriously, which may have amused Arab journalists from neighbouring countries but not local ones who began to write fiercely against the Jewish immigration.

It would seem that the family began to treat the phenomenon of Zionism more seriously only when the local papers started doing so. *Al-Karmil* began publishing excerpts from Theodore Herzl's *The State of the Jews* in 1910. The Husaynis were divided between Sa'id, who was fiercely anti-Zionist (we have some of the proclamations he made in parliament, through the Arabic press) and Husayn, who as mayor was quite cooperative with the newcomers. Husayn, like his father Salim, had been appointed to his position with the help of the Jews, the largest group in the city. It was the 'society of Jewish Ottomans', headed by one Dr Levi, director of a Palestine Bank, which had rallied that support. Hence, although he too would temporarily be a parliamentary member, Husayn did not echo the sentiments of Sa'id.[90]

An informative source on the notable families in Jerusalem was the Damascene parliamentarian, Shuqri al-Asali. For instance, he presented a query to the Ottoman parliament as to the precise number of Jews in the *sanjaq* of Jerusalem, which the government put at 100,000 but al-Asali himself estimated to be 85,000.[91] Al-Asali was a firm believer in the rumours the Arab press was carrying about the crypto-diplomatic skills of the Zionists, i.e., they were suspected to be behind the Young Turks. The alleged source of these rumours were the Arab students in Istanbul, prominent among whom were two Husaynis, Jamil, of the Hasani (i.e., the more religious) branch and Mustafa Nafiz, of the Tahiri (the more secular) branch, who together helped organize their colleagues to act against Zionist purchase of land and immigration into Palestine.[92] The prestigious *al-Ahram* first gave credence to these rumours about Zionist influence in Istanbul,[93] and one of its leading articles, published again and again, was titled 'The Zionists in the Turkish Parliament' (the most severe allegation was that the *shaykh al-Islam*, the Grand Mufti of the Ottoman Empire, Jawdat Pasha, was a converted, pro-Zionist Jew; similar suspicions were directed at Tal'at Pasha, the interior minister).[94]

On 16 May 1911, Sa'id raised the Palestine question for the first time in parliament and claimed: 'The Jews intend to establish a state in the area which will include Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia.' In response, Khalil Bey, of the Interior Ministry, informed the house that his government opposed Zionism and that Sa'id was making

unjustified allegations.[95] Sa'id's anti-Zionist stance was not easily forged. Sa'id had been sent by his father to attend the Jewish Alliance School, where among other things he had learned Hebrew, his proficiency in the language later securing him a position in the local censorship.[96] For months on end he would scrutinise the daily Hebrew press, published mainly in Jerusalem. Sa'id must have remained ambivalent even after he made his vociferous objections to Zionism in parliament, since he seems to have retracted this view when discussing Zionism with former Jewish classmates, trying to assuage their misgivings by claiming that his antagonism was voiced only for domestic consumption.[97] It is also possible that he may after all not have cared too much for his friends' feelings but was more concerned to secure their future support – he needed the votes of Jewish electors to be re-elected to parliament.[98]

It is difficult to reconstruct Isma'il's views on Zionism. He had cordial, at times even genuinely friendly, relationships with the Jewish community. In 1909 he tried to open a Commercial Bank in Jerusalem with Jewish partners, an enterprise which only failed because of strong Turkish objection. We have no written evidence of his attitude, and yet his position was crucial as he was the head of the family. He might have been, to all intents and purposes, quite indifferent or even oblivious to the developments around him.

When discussing the Husaynis' attitude towards Zionism one should be wary of the pitfall of retrospective analysis and not assume in hindsight that the subject must have been highest on the family's list of priorities. The years 1908–14 brought them an endless series of worries and concerns, some of dramatic a nature, others quite mundane: the locust invasion of 1910 may have seemed much more threatening to them than that of the Zionists – the Husaynis owned by then quite a lot of land, and a natural disaster of this kind affected the family economically to a considerable extend. The attack must have been quite horrendous as it filled the houses in the city with 'heaps' of dead insects, the authorities promising 'a nice reward for anyone turning in a sack full' of them.[99]

There were people in Palestine who were totally committed to challenging the Zionist threat, but at the time they were mainly Christians. When the Turkish paper in Arabic, *al-Mufid*, criticized the *wujaha* (notables) of Jerusalem for contributing less to the advancement of the reforms than their peers in Beirut, Najib Nasar's

paper *al-Karmil* responded with an editorial entitled 'The Arab Palestinian League'. Nasar, who was a Greek Orthodox, argued that the Palestinians 'have nothing in common with the Beirutis. We do not share the same economic and social predicament.' He suggested that the notables of Jerusalem and other cities establish a 'Palestinian League' to coordinate the elite's efforts against Zionism and to defend the *watan* (homeland) but not the reforms.[100] In other words, the antagonistic attitude towards reform was there, but whether it could have been replaced by nationalism as Nasar wanted is doubtful.

In fact, the Turkish governor in Jerusalem, Akram Bey, was totally convinced that there existed a Zionist–Husayni conspiracy against the Turkish reforms. Indeed, the salient divide in late Ottoman Palestine was what attitude to take up towards the radical reforms instigated by the government. How one treated the new reality created by the Young Turks – and not the 'vision' of reality that the Zionists brought with them – was the principal concern of the local elite.[101] This is why, for Akram Bey, the Zionists and the Husaynis were within the same oppositional front undermining his authority. He claimed that the families were corrupt and greedy and collaborated with the Jews, and he kept up records of land sales by the Husaynis to the Jews. The lands of Beit Arif, 2,000 dunams in all, were sold in 1910 by Husayn al-Husayni, the mayor, to the Anglo–Palestine Bank for the Jewish National Fund.[102] In the same year Husayn sold the land of Khuwlda, also 2,000 dunams, to the same body. Akram Bey developed cordial relations only with the Alamis and resented all other families. He was a fierce rival of the Husaynis and succeeded in ousting them from several positions by accusing them of corruption. The Husaynis responded to this campaign by reporting, in turn, the corruption of the governor to the Young Turks.[103]

However, this antagonism between the governor and the family did not lead to anti-Turkish sentiment in the family's policy, and in the years leading up to the Great War we find the Husaynis acting against Zionism within the framework of the existing political Turkish institutions, such as the parliament or the city's and the *sanjaq*'s councils. For that reason one may assume that a clear distinction prevailed in the minds of the Husaynis who were active in the matter of Zionism, between the settlers and the residential veteran Jewish–Ottoman community of Jerusalem. This explains the limited nature of their reaction against Zionism. With some of the veteran Jewish

and Christian families the Husaynis enjoyed a fair and cordial relationship. Their efforts on behalf of these families during the mainly anti-Christian terror imposed by Jamal Pasha in the city during the war testify to the intimacy of this relationship. Such efforts could mean a considerable risk to the individuals involved in them. The tendency to cope with Zionism through the institutions of the powers of the day continued to a certain degree after the British occupation. The younger generation, when they took over the family's leadership, returned in a way to the 'politics of notables', their legitimacy based on their religious and national status as recognized by both their society and the mandatory power. Colonial support was thus seen as crucial for maintaining both the family's status and for challenging the Zionist threat. In this sense, Hajj Amin al-Husayni deviated from the teachings of his tutor, Rashid Rida, who had advocated an uncompromising anti-colonialist struggle. Not even the popular and massive anti-British Egyptian uprising in 1919 could inspire similar sentiments in Palestine, though it seems to have eroded the family's trust in its ability to move the British Mandate on a pro-Palestinian course, especially when in June 1920 a pro-Zionist Jew was appointed as high commissioner of the newly established mandate.

However, as the 1920s went by, the new administration prised some of the most important official positions out of the family's hands and appointed British officials, Jews and members of rival families in their place. It was only then that a new collision course with both Britain and Zionism was sought. It was, however, far too late in the day and the family failed in its task, for reasons which are beyond the scope of this article.

Their failure does not necessarily indicate that the Husaynis were 'traditionalists'. The historical narrative of the group Albert Hourani described as 'nobles de robe' forces a revised periodization and terminology on the conventional historiography of the conflict. The conventional historiography of the mandatory period juxtaposes the modern and revolutionary Zionists with the 'traditional' Arab leadership. If one examines this dichotomy from within the Husaynis' history, the picture that arises is one of a family whose leadership in the early years of the mandate was young and rebellious, led by a youth in his early twenties, which openly challenged the traditional heads of the family.[104]

This challenge, which had begun long before the British

occupation, is the real watershed in the family's history. The occupation was indeed a dramatic juncture in the history of Palestine, but it was the Young Turks' revolution twelve years earlier that had been traumatic to many elder members of the family whereas the younger generation adapted itself successfully to the changes brought by the Young Turks, and even to the transformation of Palestine by the British authorities, as did younger generations all over the Arab world. However, none of the Husaynis' peers or, indeed, none of the Palestinians' peers in the Arab world outside Palestine, were ever forced to contribute, unwillingly, to the solution of the Jewish problems in Europe as envisioned by the Zionists.

In the period under review the family underwent a long process of transformation. In each generation it was the young members who were the first to internalize the massive processes of change, digest and then exploit them. The success or failure of the process depended on the educational skills acquired in the modernized system offered by the Turkish reformers to young Husaynis on the one hand, and the way the family's tradition of survival proved valid in modern times, on the other. When, in 1922, his educational background and the 'politics of notables' brought Hajj Amin al-Husayni to the presidency of the Supreme Muslim Council, the event was in a way the apex of this process. But these same skills would prove wholly inadequate when in subsequent years the family encountered its nemesis in the confrontation with the Zionist movement.

Notes

1. See for instance, Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State* (London, 1992), pp. 121–82.

2. Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford,1981), p. xvii.

3. Albert Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables', in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (eds), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1968). The article is also included in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 36–66 (references in the following pages are to this publication).

4. Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate* (Princeton, 1987).

5. Manuel Hasassian, *al-Sir'a al-siyasi fi dahil al-haraka al-filastiniyya* (The Political Struggle within the Palestinian Movement), (Bir Zeit, 1984), pp. 64–5.

6. Musa Ishaq al-Husayni, *al-Usra al-Husaniyya* (The Husaynis), Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 1–2.

7. 'Adel Mana', 'Mered Naqib al-Ashraf be-Yerushalaim, 1703–1705' (The Revolt of Naqib al-Ashraf in Jerusalem, 1703–1705), *Cathedra* 53 (September, 1989), pp. 49–74, and Butrus Abu Maneh, 'The Husaynis: The Rise of Notable Family in 18th Century Palestine', in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 93–108.

8. Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London, 1991), p. 30.

9. Edward Hadad, 'Political Parties in Syria and Lebanon', *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 1/1 (1920), p. 212.

10. Miriam Hoexter, 'The Role of Qays and Yemen Factions in Local Political Divisions: Jabal Nablus Compared with the Judean Hills in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Asian and African Studies* 9/3(1973), pp. 301–4.

11. PRO, FO 78/1220, Jerusalem to London, 27 April 1855.

12. Mustafa Murad al-Dabagh, *Biladuna Filastin* (Our Land Palestine), (Beirut, 1965), vol. 10, part 2, p. 15.

13. File 188.1, 1839 in Rustum Asad, *al-Mahfuzat al-malkiyya al-misriyya* (The Egyptian Royal Archives), vols 1–4 (Cairo, 1940–46).

14. File 359.2, 1839, ibid.

15. Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians* (New York, 1993), pp. 3–20, 36–51.

16. Uriel Heyd, *Eretz Israel ba-Tekufa ha-Othmanit* (Palestine in the Ottoman Period) (Jerusalem, 1969), p. 49. File 314.2, 1839, in Rustum Asad, provides Muhammad Ali's permission to the consuls in Jerusalem to build stores near the hospital Dir al-Afranaj but file 330.2 prohibits the American consul from waving his country's flag, because of 'local objection'.

17. Firman from the Sublime Porte to al-Tayar Pasha (who was the *wali* of Gaza and Jerusalem 1841), doc. 27 in Philip and Farid al-Hazik, *Majmu'at al-muharirat al-siyasiyya wa'l-ufawadat al-dawliyya 'an Suriyya wa'l- Lubnan min sanat 1840 ila sanat 1910* (A Collection of the Political Files on the International Negotiations on Syria and Lebanon from 1840 until 1910), (Junya, 1910), p. 52.

18. Hourani, *Emergence*, pp. 62–5.

19. Arif al-Arif, *Tarih al-Quds* (The History of Jerusalem), (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 118–9.

20. PRO, FO 78/540, Jerusalem to London, 20 April 1848.

21. PRO, FO 78/540, Jerusalem to London, 10 June 1844.

22. PRO, FO 78/540, Young to Consul Rose in Beirut, 15 July 1843. Turkish soldiers attacked Dr Macregor, a British physician in Jerusalem. This was due, so Young claimed, to the bad influence of the 'Effendis', especially the Husayni family. The 'Effendis' wanted to 'harm' the Europeans. Macregor rode by himself, and hence it was decided to recommend that Europeans should not ride alone through the Suq. See also reports by Young in FO 78/625, 4 August 1843 and 2 October 1843, 21 April 1844.

23. Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882* (Washington, 1992), pp. 61–77, 110–8.

24. PRO, FO 78/664, Jerusalem to London, 1 October 1846.
25. PRO, FO 78/913, Jerusalem to London, 18 September 1852.
26. Ibrahim al-Aswad, *al-Rihla al-imbratoriyya fi al-mamalik al-uthmaniyya* (The Imperial Tour in the Ottoman Areas); al-Aswad accompanied the trip (Babda, 1898).
27. Ibid.
28. PRO, FO 78/5352, Jerusalem to London, 20 February 1899.
29. PRO FO 78/5285, Jerusalem to London, 14 November 1903.
30. al-Arif, *Tarih*, p. 123.
31. PRO, FO 78/5285, Jerusalem to London, 14 November 1903.
32. PRO, FO 78/962, Jerusalem to London, 27 April 1853.
33. PRO, FO 78/5265, Jerusalem to London, 10 December 1903.
34. Iris Agmon, 'Sahar Huz ke-Gorem le-Tmurot Be-'Anfei ha-Meshek ha-'Aravi be-Ertez-Israel (1897–1914)' (Foreign Trade as a Factor in the Transformations of the Arab Market in Palestine), *Cathedra* , 41 (October 1986), p. 127. Railway tracks to the east and the north would be added later. A local Ottoman citizen, Yossef Navon, won the concession in 1888 but passed it to a French company, so it was in the end a French venture.
35. Ibid., p. 107.
36. Gabriel Baer concluded of the families in general, that '[they] benefited considerably from the transaction [of dismemberment of *waqfs*] in which they were involved.' Gabriel Baer, 'Jerusalem's Families of Notables and the Wakf in the Early 19th Century', in Kushner (ed.), *Palestine*, p. 114.
37. *Agmon*, p. 114. n. 29.
38. Ibid., p. 123, n. 88.
39. Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation*, pp. 267–83.
40. PRO, FO 78/540, Earl of Aberdeen to Consul Young, 15 November 1843. The Foreign Secretary wrote: 'You should not follow the French example and wave the flag over your residence. Take a cautious line.'
41. Sir H. Elliot to Earl of Derby on 4 January 1876 in document 169, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Series B, The Near and the Middle East, part 1, vol. 2 (London, 1985).
42. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century; the Old City* (Jerusalem, 1980) pp. 119, 134, and David Kushner, *Moshel Hayiti* ('I was Governor; the City and the District in the eyes of Ali Akram Bey, 1906–1908'), (Jerusalem, 1995) p. 283 (offers a summary of the diary of Akram Bey).
43. Claude Reignier, *Tent Work in Palestine*, vol. 1 (London, 1878), pp. 334–5.
44. Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 134.
45. Francis Newman, *Fifty Years in Palestine* (London, 1848), p. 125.
46. Herbert Spoer, 'Das Nebi Musa Fest', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palestina-Vereins* 32 (1909), p. 215.
47. PRO, FO 78/839, Jerusalem to London, 24 September 1850.
48. PRO, FO 78/839, Jerusalem to London, 10 July 1850.

49. PRO, FO 78/839, 14 August 1850. There is also a letter from Finn to the governor, Adham Pasha, in FO 78/839, 5 August 1850.
50. al-Arif, *Tarih*, p. 120.
51. Haim Gerber, 'A New Look at the Tanzimat: The Case of the Province of Jerusalem', in Kushner (ed.), *Palestine*, pp. 41–2.
52. By 648 votes out of 1200 electors; see 'Adel Mana', *A'lam Filastin fi awakhir al-ahd al-uthmani (1800–1914)* (The Notables of Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period), (Beirut, 1986), p. 124.
53. Albert Hourani assumed that the notables all in all objected to centralization and reforms; see Hourani, *Emergence*, pp. 62–5.
54. Butrus Abu Maneh, 'The Rise of the Sanjak of Jerusalem in the Late 19th Century', in Gabriel Ben-Dor (ed.), *The Palestinians and the Conflict* (Haifa, 1982), pp. 21–32.
55. Ibid., pp. 8–11.
56. Ibid., p. 21.
57. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, 1961), p. 169.
58. Izzat Tanus, *al-Filastiniyyun: Madi majid wa-mustaqbal bahir* (The Palestinians: A Noble Past and a Glorious Future), (Beirut, 1982), pp. 22–3.
59. Ibid., p. 24, and Muhammad Izzat Darwazah, *Mudhakirat wa-tasjilat* (Memoirs and Notes), (Damascus, 1984), vol. 1, p. 174.
60. Walid al-Khalidi, *Qabl al-shitat, al-tarih al-musawar lil sha'b al-filastini, 1876–1948*, (Before the Diaspora; A Pictorial History of the Palestinian People), (Beirut, 1987), picture no. 7.
61. Darwazah testifies to this ardent newspaper reading; see Darwazah, *Mudhakirat*, p. 172.
62. al-Dabagh, *Biladuna*, vol. 10, part 2, pp. 369–70.
63. Khalil al-Sakakini, *Kadha Ana Ya Dunya* (Such Am I, Oh World), (Beirut, 1984), 16 November 1908.
64. The Arab–Ottoman union was founded by Shuqri on 5 August, 1908 and had members drawn from among all the Arabs serving in the Ottoman administration.
65. al-Dabagh, *Biladuna*, vol. 10, part 2, pp. 369–70.
66. 'Ajaj Nuhayd, *'Rajul min Filastin: Khalil Sakakini'* (A Man from Palestine: Khalil Sakakini), *Filastin*, 12 July 1955.
67. Amin Sa'id, *al-Thawra al-'arabiyya al-kubra* (The Great Arab Revolt), (Cairo, nd.), vol. 1, pp. 7–8.
68. Darwazah, *Mudhakirat*, p. 174.
69. Ibid., pp. 174–6.
70. Ibid., p. 171.
71. al-Sakakini, 12 November 1908, and Kushner, *Moshel*.
72. Tanus, *al-Filastiniyyun*, p. 54.
73. al-Sakakini, 21 September 1908.
74. Taysir Jabara, *Dirasat fi tarih Filastin* (Studies in the History of Palestine), (Jerusalem, 1987), p. 39.

75. Darwazah, *Mudhakirat*, p. 181.
76. Byan Nuhayd al-Hut, *al-Qiyadat wa'l-Mu'asasat al-Siyasiya fi Filastin, 1917–1948* (Political Leadership and Institutions in Palestine), (Beirut, 1981), p. 849.
77. al-Dabagh, *Biladuna*, vol. 10, part 2, pp. 379–80.
78. Tanus, *al-Filastiniyyun*, p. 17.
79. Ibid., p. 14.
80. Central Zionist Archives S25/10499, Biography of Amin al-Husayni, and interview with Zaynab al-Husayni (daughter of Amin al-Husayni and Haydar al-Husayni).
81. Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem; Haj Amin Al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement*, (New York, 1994), pp. 8–9.
82. Ibid., p. 9.
83. Ibid.
84. Tanus, *al-Filastiniyyun*, p. 28.
85. Ibid., p. 218.
86. Arif al-Arif, *Tarih*, p. 119. This change of policy was due to British pressure on the sultan; cf. PRO, FO 78/5749, British Ambassador to the Marquis of Salisbury, 1 September 1891.
87. PRO, FO 78/5749, Jerusalem to London, 3 July 1900.
88. PRO, FO 78/5497, Beirut to Istanbul, 13 January 1901.
89. PRO, FO 78/5352, Jerusalem to London, July 1904.
90. Michael Asaf, *Ha-Yehasim beyn 'Aravim ve-Yehudim be-Eretz-Israel, 1860–1948* (Relationship between Arabs and Jews in Palestine), (Tel-Aviv, 1970), p. 62.
91. Mahmud Hasa Salih Mansa, *Tarikh al-sharq al-'arabi al-hadith* (The History of the Modern Arab East), (Beirut, 1984), p. 150.
92. Darwazah, *Mudhakirat*, p. 188.
93. *al-Ahram*, 11 March 1911.
94. *al-Ahram*, 15 March 1911 and 7 February 1913.
95. Neville Manderl, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War 1* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 112–3.
96. On Sa'id's Hebrew abilities, see 'Abd al-Wahab al-Kayali, *Tarikh Filastin al-hadith* (The Modern History of Palestine), (Beirut, 1973), p. 63.
97. *Herut*, March 1914.
98. Mandel, pp. 65–6.
99. Darwazah, *Mudhakirat*, part 1, p. 128.
100. *al-Karmil*, no. 336, 3 September 1913, p. 1.
101. Kushner, *Moshel*, p. 184.
102. Ibid., p. 79.
103. Ibid., p. 236.
104. The Husaynis' terminology differs substantially from the professional and neutral terminology of the research. In this article I have tried to keep a dialogue of sorts between scholars' terminology and that of my subject matter.

The adoption of the Husaynis' terminology clearly challenges the Israeli historiography which traditionally has depicted the family as the epitome of corruption, fanaticism and tradition.

7 ❁ Attempts to Create a Political Community in Modern Syria

Moshe Ma'oz

Wnen Syria became independent in 1946 its population was highly heterogeneous; within it there existed gaps andfrictions among various religious sects, social classes, tribal groups and even between the inhabitants of different towns, such as Damascus and Aleppo. Some of these groups and sects tended to live their own lives in autonomous bodies such as religious communities or nomadic tribes, and would not submit to central authority. Many inhabitants lacked a strong sense of an all-Syrian territorial identity; there was no common ideological consensus among the various sections of the population.

Even today, fifty years after independence and seventy-five years after becoming a political unit of its own, Syria is still in search of a cohesive national community; it lacks this despite the great efforts and noticeable achievements in that direction over the last two generations. The causes of this absence of cohesiveness are complex and contain a whole host of factors which can be examined from various approaches. The approach of this essay will be historical; it will survey the development of the ideas of political community in modern Syria and will try to examine some of the factors which seem to have influenced the process of creating a Syrian nation state.

The Ottoman Era

Throughout its history, from the end of the Umayyad Kingdom until the end of the French Mandate, present-day Syria was almost never a single political entity. It never had, throughout this period, an indigenous central authority capable of attracting the loyalty and obedience of the entire population. Rather it formed part of vast empires whose centres were far beyond its borders; the country was

also divided into a number of provinces, each being governed separately from the imperial centre.

This situation was particularly evident during the long period of Ottoman rule, which in many ways was responsible for shaping the sociopolitical regime in modern Syria. It is well known that the Ottoman sultan constituted for generations the focus of religio-political allegiance for the majority of the Syrian population who were Sunni Muslims. But as time went on their political loyalty to him waned and became somewhat nebulous. This falling off was due to the decline of Ottoman power and the lack of authority of Ottoman provincial rule, as well as to the government's inability to guarantee the life and property of its subjects. The Syrian population which had thus lost faith in the power of the central government gave its loyalty to local rulers and leaders who were able to maintain tolerable order and security. These were tribal chiefs, semi-feudal lords and village shaykhs in the countryside, as well as military commanders, communal heads and urban notables in the cities.[1]

The only social group which usually identified itself with the sultan and the Ottoman Empire consisted of the members of the Ottoman establishment in the provinces: *ulama* and other religious functionaries as well as senior officials and members of the *diwan*. Those were, in other words, full participants in the Muslim–Ottoman political community.

One of the major aims of the Ottoman reform movement in the nineteenth century was to extend this small circle of membership in the Ottoman political community, and to include in it other sections of the population, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In order to achieve this goal the Tanzimat leaders and the 'Young Ottomans' strove to replace the old Ottoman–Muslim basis of the state with a new Ottoman-patriotic and non-religious framework. With this in mind they endeavoured to make three changes: to reinforce the sultan's political authority in the provinces; to improve the social and economic conditions of the population; and to place the non-Muslim subjects on the same footing as the Muslim majority.

At about the same time as the Ottomanists were active in Istanbul, and pushing their ideas out into the provinces, there emerged in Beirut a small cultural-ideological group which possessed ideas similar to those of the Ottomanists. After the events of 1860 in Lebanon and Damascus, a number of Syrian Christian intellectuals, mainly

Orthodox and Protestant, sought to establish a new kind of relationship with their Muslim–Sunni and Druze neighbours. Unlike most of their countrymen, these Syrian intellectuals realized that a religious loyalty was a dangerous common denominator and wished to replace it by secular common ground. This ground was to take shape as common patriotic feeling towards the Ottoman homeland (*watan*); but within this homeland there was to be a special attachment to the land (*bilad*) of Syria. A further common denominator for the inhabitants of this land was to be Arab language and culture. The initiators of the Syrian–Arab cultural movement were not satisfied with merely preaching their ideas. Men of letters such as Butrus al-Bustani, Faris al-Shidyaq, Marun al-Naqqash, Khalil al-Khuri and others took an active part in reviving the Arab language and Arabic literature. They established literary societies, an Arabic theatre and wrote articles as well as scholarly works in Arabic. In the writings of Butrus al-Bustani there appeared for the first time in Syrian history the phrases *hubb al-watan* (love of the homeland) and *bilad Suriyya* (the land of Syria) in their modern sense.[2] The term 'Syria' as a territorial entity was probably borrowed from Christian and European sources; it was possibly influenced by the terminology of the Byzantines and the Crusaders.[3] It was already used in 1840 in Turkish and Arabic leaflets which were distributed in Mount Lebanon by the commander of the Allied Forces. These leaflets were addressed to the inhabitants of *barr* (land) *al*-sham or Syria.[4] The borders of Syria were defined by Khalil al-Khuri in *Hadikat al-Akhbar* of 19 Ayar 1866 as follows: from the Euphrates in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and from the Arabian desert in the south to Anatolia in the north.

The fact that Bustani's group put special emphasis on the land of Syria and on the Arabic language and culture did not at first cause any clash with the Ottoman reform movement. Essentially both movements were working for the same purpose: the creation of a new political community based on the principles of the separation of religion from the state, equality for all inhabitants and their loyalty to the same homeland – the Ottoman state. And indeed during the 1860s and the 1870s connections were established between certain leaders of both movements; the Syrian cultural group was also granted de facto recognition and given support by the Ottoman authorities. Faris al-Shidyaq and Butrus al-Bustani received literary prizes from the

sultan while Marun al-Naqqash and Khalil al-Khuri were employed by the Ottoman government.[5]

Furthermore, many of the reforms introduced by the Ottoman government into the Syrian provinces contributed directly or indirectly to the idea of a political community in Syria. Roads were built, printing presses established and newspapers published, all of which promoted social intercourse between various sections of the population. Modern secondary schools (*rushdiye*) were established by the government for the first time. Among their aims was promotion of patriotic feelings and 'to lessen the mutual ill-feeling ... between the two sects'.[6]

Other administrative measures taken during that period also contain germs of Syrian territorial unity, with Damascus at its centre. Already during the decade of Egyptian rule in the 1830s geographical Syria – or *bilad* (or *barr*) *al-sham* as it was called by the Mamluks and the Ottomans – was unified under one central government. Damascus became the residence of the central government and also the seat of the central *majlis shura* (advisory council) which supervised the local councils in all Syrian towns. When Ottoman rule was restored Damascus continued over long periods of time to be the seat of the *serasker*, chief commander of the Army of Arabistan who was responsible for the preservation of security and order throughout Syria.

But apart from its administrative importance, the city of Damascus had in yet another respect a status superior to all other Syrian provincial centres. It was an important Islamic centre – the seat of the Banu Umayya Mosque, of well-known *madrasa*s and distinguished *ulama*. Damascus was also the assembly point of the yearly pilgrimage caravan (*hajj*) to Mecca.

In addition to the city, the province of Damascus also became at the same time a potential nucleus of a larger Syrian entity. In the mid-1860s the area of jurisdiction of this province was greatly expanded and it was for the first time called the '*vilayet* of Syria' (*Wilayat Suriyya*). Able Ottoman *vali*s such as Rashid Pasha in the late 1860s and Midhat Pasha in the late 1870s made great efforts to improve the administrative machinery, the security conditions, the educational facilities as well as the economic infrastructure of the province.[7] They also tried to promote a sense of civic responsibility and good citizenship among the inhabitants. For example, in 1867 a special council composed of representatives from the various districts was set up by the *vali* and was given the task of advising him in matters of development.[8]

In 1876 four notables from the *vilayet* of Syria were chosen to represent it in the newly opened Ottoman parliament. At about the same time, the activities of the Syrian cultural group increased and took on a political colouring. In 1875 a number of young Christians, followers of Bustani, formed in Beirut a small secret society which demanded an autonomous Syria together with Lebanon, and the recognition of Arabic as its official language. These demands were set out on posters which were displayed in Syrian towns. On them one saw phrases like 'sons of Syria', 'Arab pride' and 'degenerate Turks'. This secret society, which apparently also included Druzes and Sunnis, was possibly in league with Midhat Pasha, and their common aim was to make Syria, like Egypt, autonomous.

At this stage, however, the Ottoman authorities intervened at the direction of Sultan Abdülhamid II, they arrested some members of the secret society and later banished Midhat Pasha from Syria. This episode brought to an end the cooperative efforts of the Ottomanists and the Syrian–Arab patriots, and finished their attempts to create a new political community 'from above'.

It is worthwhile looking at the results of the common attempt by those two elite groups to promote patriotic feelings within Syria. The author of Murray's *Handbook for Travellers*, who visited Syria in the late 1850s, writes: ' ... patriotism is unknown ... There is not a man in the country whether Turk or Arab, Mohammedan or Christian who would give a para (penny) to save the empire from ruin ... The patriotism of the Syrian is confined to the four walls of his own house; anything beyond them does not concern him."[9]

Even in the beginning of the twentieth century there was not much change in this state of affairs. Yusuf al-Hakim, a Syrian Christian intellectual and an Ottoman senior judge (later to become a minister in the Faysal administration in Damascus), remarks: 'The patriotic bond (*irtibat watani*) is weak and it is felt only by a few members of the upper class."[10]

Indeed, the basic loyalty of the majority of the population was still to family, tribe or religious community. Throughout the nineteenth century the Ottoman reform movement had not succeeded in transforming these traditional and semi-autonomous groups into a unified modern society. Similarly, the modern notions of patriotism propagated by the Young Ottomans or the Bustani group failed to attract the majority of the population.

This failure was due partly to religious conviction, which was still powerful, and partly to segregation of religious groups under the educational system: most Muslim children went to *kuttab*s and *madrasa*s which provided only Islamic education, while many Christians acquired a narrow sectarian education in their communal schools. Even the new educational institutions, which were established in Syria, mainly after 1860, could not or would not alter this system. The new Ottoman schools were few and far between, and accepted mainly Muslim students, whereas the missionary schools were numerous, but had hardly any Muslim pupils. One observer records that in these schools 'no attempt ... [was] ... made to inspire the pupils, all Ottoman subjects, with any feeling of loyalty towards their sovereign or patriotism to their country.'[11]

Thus, during the second half of the nineteenth century, while national communities of different forms were emerging elsewhere in the Middle East, namely in Egypt and Lebanon, in Syria the attempts at modernization had a reverse effect. They contributed to further widening of the gap between Muslims and Christians and consequently to creating violent disturbances between the two communities.[12]

It is true that from time to time there appeared manifestations of solidarity and cooperation between Muslims, Christians and Druzes against conscription, or against other harsh measures carried out by the Ottoman government. But these were isolated cases which did not indicate a new tendency. As a British consul reported in 1907: 'No symptom is noticeable which would tend to support the belief that any cohesion exists between the different classes of people ... Religious differences are still as powerful as ever to effect a cleavage among neighbours and fellow-citizens.'[13]

Nevertheless, there was one significant outcome of the conception of a new Ottoman community. Certain Muslim circles began to develop an Islamic–Arab consciousness as a reaction to the secular Ottoman modernization movement. Muslims in Syria started to question the right of Sultan Abdülmajid,'*al-kha'in*' (the betrayer of trust), to lead the Islamic faith. Some even spoke in the 1850s of 'a separation from the Ottoman Empire and the formation of a new Arabian state under the sovereignty of the Shereef of Mecca.'[14]

In later years prominent Muslim intellectuals of Syrian origin – like Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi and Rashid Rida – demanded the

abstraction of the caliphate from the Ottomans and the creation of an independent Arab caliphate.

Yet, these Muslim–Arab feelings were fairly nebulous and were immature and sporadic during the second half of the nineteenth century. They became powerful and widespread only at the beginning of the twentieth century in reaction to the Young Turks' policy of Turkism and secularism.

Until the turn of the century loyalty to the Ottoman Muslim state was still paramount among the great majority of the Syrian Muslims and it kept 'in check every other feeling'.[15] This was particularly due to the policy of the conservative Sultan Abdülhamid II. He suppressed the attempts of the Young Ottomans to create a non-religious community and did what he could to emphasize the Islamic character of his empire. The sultan also reinforced the loyalty of his Muslim subjects in Syria by building new schools and by inviting *'ulama* and notables to Istanbul and treating them with great esteem. Some were even nominated as his close assistants. Best known are Shaykh Abu al-Huda and Izzat Pasha, who incidentally were personal rivals of Kawakibi and Rida, the forefathers of the Arab national movement.

On the eve of the First World War two political-ideological movements were to be seen within the Muslim elite of Syria: one was pro-Ottomanist, the other Arab nationalist, and they appeared to be – as Ernest Dawn has shown – in conflict.[16] Apart from drawing their membership from the upper class of the population, both movements possessed other common features: both were imbued with a strong Islamic feeling and were devoid of territorial attachment to Syria. These characteristics were particularly true of the pro-Ottomanists who regarded themselves as Ottoman subjects/inhabitants of Damascus, Aleppo or Beirut, and not as Arabs of Syria. For example, the nine notables who were elected in 1876 from the Syrian *vilayets* to the Ottoman parliament did not form a single bloc in the parliament, either Syrian or Arab, and never raised any matter concerning Syria.[17]

On the other hand, the members of the national societies, most of them Syrians, regarded themselves first as Arabs, and demanded autonomy or independence for all Arab lands. Nevertheless, while putting forward these demands, the Arab nationalists probably thought of Bilad al-Sham as the centre of the great Arab state and of Damascus as its capital.

Under the French Mandate

It was only after the First World War that a sense of Arab–Syrian identity became more evident with the formation of a separate political unit in Syria by the Great Powers and Amir Faysal. It is interesting to note the way in which the terminology changed at this moment: first Faysal's organization was called the 'Arab–Syrian Government' and finally it was called 'the Kingdom of Syria'. Indeed the Syrian Congress (formally the National Congress) decided in 1920, according to Sati al-Husri, to abandon temporarily 'the policy of the Great Arab State which was the ultimate goal of the Arab revolt and to adopt a policy of a united Syrian kingdom'.[18] This kingdom was to consist of geographical Syria within its natural boundaries, and to be Arabic in its language and culture.

It seems then that the Arab national movement at the time of Faysal's kingdom took up Bustani's original ideas of a Syrian–Arab entity in Greater Syria. In fact, however, there were fundamental differences between those two conceptions. First, the Arab national movement in Syria was essentially pan-Arab and never pan-Syrian and it regarded Syrian unity merely as a step towards all-Arab unity. Second, the Arab national movement had an Islamic colouring, unlike Bustani's Syrian group which was secular in principle.

It is possible that Faysal personally was for the separation of religion from the state; this can be deduced from his well-known slogan which says *'ad-din li-llahii wa'l watan li'ljami'i'*[19] (religion is for God and the country for all). However, the majority of the Syrian Congress members had a more conservative approach and they subjected Faysal to severe criticism for his liberal policy. In the draft constitution prepared by the congress, Islam was indeed declared as the religion of the Syrian state.

These two divergent and mutually contradictory streams of Muslim and pan-Arab nationalism on one hand, and of secular and pan-Syrian patriotism on the other, continued to influence political thinking in post-1920 Syria and formed the basis of the two rival conceptions of that time.

The notion of secular and pan-Syrian patriotism was carried on into the programme of the Syrian Nationalist Party (al-Hizb al-Qawmi al-Suri, or PPS) which was founded in 1932 by Antun Sa'ada. It stood for the recreation of a Syrian nation, for the establishment of a Syrian entity in geographical Syria, and for the separation of religion from

politics. But just as had happened in the nineteenth century, these ideas remained confined mainly to members of minority groups, particularly Christians and Alawis, while the majority of Sunni Arabs in Syria rejected them.

The latter continued to hold the ideas of pan-Arab nationalism which were now adopted by the National Bloc (the Kutla) in Syria, and later also by the Ba'th Party.

Unquestionably, the sense of Syrian–Arab identity did not completely fade away among the political elite of mandatory Syria. On the contrary, it may have increased to some extent owing to the following factors: first, the creation of a Syrian state and local institutions – such as a cabinet and parliament – all of which provided the framework for a separate Syrian entity. Second, the concentration of the nationalists' efforts upon the struggle against French rule, and this at the expense of their basic pan-Arab tendencies. Third, the emergence of separate and viable political entities in Iraq and Egypt. These countries not only refused to see Syria as the centre of Arab unity but also successively took upon themselves the leadership of the Arab national movement.

Yet, despite all these unifying factors, Syrian national identity remained immature and certainly weaker than in Egypt and perhaps even than in Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine.

The major reason for this lack of cohesion was, of course, the deliberate policy of the French mandatory authority which sought to undermine the basis of Faysal's great attempt to set up an independent and united state in Syria, and to create a Syrian–Arab political community. The French went even further and cut off the main body of important Syrian districts, such as Tripoli, the Biqa and Sidon, which were annexed to Greater Lebanon in 1920; they likewise lopped off Jabal Druze and Jabal Ansariyya which became separate 'states' in the early 1920s; they did the same to the Jazira and the Sanjaq of Alexandretta, which were given special administration; one of these, Alexandretta, they cut away altogether, ending by surrendering it to Turkey in 1939.

Similarly, the French authorities promoted religious and sectarian divisions within the population and refrained from repairing or unifying the educational system. For example, in 1938 only 31 per cent of Syrian pupils, most of them Muslims, attended state schools, compared to 38 per cent who attended private schools and 20 per

cent who went to foreign schools, most of them Christian,[20] (the rest attended the *kuttabs* or remained unschooled).

In addition, the French Mandate did very little to improve the poor conditions of the lower classes of the population or to diminish the socioeconomic gap between them and the upper class. At this point it should be stressed that Syrian national leaders themselves shared responsibility for failure to repair the gaps and divisions within Syrian society and for the weakness of Syria as an entity.

The leaders of the nationalist movement themselves belonged to the Syrian upper class – those 100 or so families of big landowners, merchants and proprietors who had constituted the political elite in Syria for over a century. It was in their vested, but narrow, interests to maintain their socioeconomic status quo already crystallized under the Ottomans. This is no doubt why they refrained from embarking on any policy of social reform.

Similarly, the approach of the nationalist leaders to the issue of religion and state was influenced by the conservative views of some of their members. Admittedly the national movement contained prominent Christian personalities such as Faris and Fayz al-Khuri, Edmund Rabbath, Edmund al-Humsi and others, and some of them held very important posts. The programme of the *Kutla* as well as the Syrian constitution, also contained principles of freedom of conscience and of worship, religious tolerance and national patriotism.

In fact, however, not all those principles were put into practice. A commission appointed by the League of Nations to study the personal status of certain non-Sunni communities reported in 1934: 'The commission regretted to note that the application of Syrian legislation prescribing equality before the law is still sometimes impeded through the absence of a spirit of tolerance on the part of the autochthonous authorities.'[21]

Four years later, in 1938, the Syrian nationalist government, under the pressure of the *ulama*, refused to apply the new law of personal status which gave legal expression to the principles of freedom of conscience and equality before the law.[22]

Other factors which helped to impede the process of creating a Syrian national community were likewise connected with the pre-1920 habits of the political elite; these were the strong regional tendencies among the urban oligarchy and the powerful pan-Arab trends within the Syrian national movement. Thus, the Kutla formed

a solid bloc as long as the struggle against the French continued, but after the treaty of 1936 the National Bloc started to splinter along regional and personal lines for example, the 'People's Party' of Aleppo led by Rushdi al-Kikhya and Nazim al-Qudsi revolted against the leadership of Sa'dallah al-Jabiri; while the 'Republican Party' of Jamil Mardam of Damascus broke off with Shukri al-Quwwatli and al-Jabiri of the Kutla, which later became the 'National Party'.

None of these politicians was able to become the national Syrian leader, or a focus of authority, unity and loyalty for the population – such as Zaghlul and Nahhas were in Egypt, and perhaps even Faysal in Iraq.

Consequently, Syrian statesmen tended to cast their eyes beyond the borders towards Iraq and Egypt; e.g., the Aleppo faction of the national movement developed a pro-Iraqi tendency, whereas in Damascus pro-Egyptian orientations were fashionable. The other side of this coin is that Syria became the prey of unity efforts – projects conceived by her Arab neighbours in the early 1940s such as King Abdallah's Greater Syria project or Nuri Sa'id's 'Fertile Crescent' plan.

When Syria became independent in 1946 it was by no means a nation-state nor had it a coherent political community to rely upon. An illustration of the diversified character of Syrian society in that period can be found in the description of the Syrian parliament in 1947 by Habib Kahalah, one of its members: 'I look around me and see only a bundle of contradictions ... Men whom nothing united, sharing no principles ... ; some were illiterate, others distinguished men of letters; some spoke only Kurdish or Armenian, others only Turkish; some wore a tarbush, others a kafiyeh ... '[23]

Changes Since Independence

Yet once the French had gone, Syrian leaders were in a better position to embark upon the appallingly difficult task of achieving national unity. This process started on a large scale only under the military dictatorship of Adib Shishakli in the early 1950s; it gained momentum paradoxically during the period of the union with Egypt; and has been making impressive progress ever since the Ba'th revolution of 1963.

One of the first steps taken by the Syrian government after independence was to reduce, and eventually to abolish, communal representation in the parliament which the various minorities had

enjoyed under the French Mandate. A further step in this direction was to abrogate certain jurisdictional rights in matters of personal status, which had been granted to the Alawis and the Druzes by the French authorities. These regulations, which sparked agitation among all the minority communities, were accompanied by a series of military measures directed to destroy the centrifugal forces in the hilly regions of the Druzes and Alawis, and establish a centralized rule in Damascus.

The crushing of the Druze revolt in 1954 became a turning point in the balance of power between the central government and the mountain-dwelling heterodox communities. The authorities in Damascus for the first time were able to achieve a decisive military superiority over the wayward minorities through the use of sophisticated weapons and methods. The seclusion and autonomy of those communities came to their end; and from then on they began to take an increasing part in the political life and the struggles for power which occurred both in the army and within the parties. Thus a growing number of Alawis and Druzes became involved in a process which had already begun among other minority groups.

Like many of their Christian countrymen, they began to join political parties, particularly those which stood for secularism and social change, such as the PPS and the Ba'th; young members of the Alawi and Druze communities enlisted in the military service in great numbers and consequently came to play a growing part in Syrian politics and social life.

Alongside this process, which occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, other developments also contributed to drawing the minorities and other sections of the population to each other and planting the seeds of common identity. These developments were the accelerated pace of modernization and secularization and the intensification of national instruction through the expanding network of mass communication, notably the school system.

The state educational system had indeed vastly expanded since the end of the mandate. The number of state schools grew from 658 in 1945 to 3,804 in 1964 as against a growth of only about 300 schools during the twenty years 1925–45. Over the same period the number of foreign and private (communal) schools was diminishing fast, from 40 per cent of all schools in 1945 to 19 per cent in 1951 to almost nil in 1967.[24]

Other major developments which occurred in the Republic of Syria

during that period also contributed to repairing the socioeconomic gaps between the various classes of the population. During the time of Syria's union with Egypt (UAR, 1958–61) and under the Ba'th regime (since 1963), there occurred far-reaching socialist reforms. Large tracts of land were appropriated from big landowners and allocated partly to landless peasants and partly to newly established agricultural cooperatives; large private enterprises were nationalized while the state-owned public sector in industry and commerce was promoted, and the condition of workers was greatly improved.[25]

These reforms added up to a sociopolitical revolution in Syria perhaps unparalleled in the Arab Middle East. The revolution destroyed the old ruling class and political elite of big landowners, merchants, industrialists and leaders of the nationalist parties. Instead, there emerged a new political elite composed of young army officers and politicians, members of new and radical parties. Simultaneously, the way was opened to the betterment of the middle and lower classes of the population – workers, peasants and intelligentsia – Sunnis and non-Sunnis alike. For the last generations these classes have been the core of a political community that the new Syrian elite has been trying to mould.

But, during the 1950s and 1960s, there was no consensus within this ruling elite about the linkage between Syria and Arab unity or about the relation between state and religion in Syria. On the one hand, the PPS was still standing for a separate Syrian secular nationalism, although it now conceded that Syria might lead some Arab grouping. On the other hand, the Ba'th was a pan-Arab party which regarded Arab unity as one of its first goals; and although in theory it supported the separation of religion from state, the Ba'th considered Islam as a vital element in Arab nationalism. It is interesting to note that Adib Shishakli, the first reformer of independent Syria, was apparently influenced by the conceptions of the PPS and also by Akram Hawrani, the leader of the Arab socialist movement who later joined the Ba'th. On the issue of Syria and Arab unity, Shishakli tended to follow the PPS line: he strove to establish an independent Syrian entity and tried to reassert Syria's special role in the Arab world. But at the same time he emphasized the Arab and Muslim character of the state – a trend which was more or less similar to the ideas of the Ba'th and the old nationalist parties.

For the first time in the modern history of Syria, Shishakli carried

out a bold policy of Arabization of public life and of the educational system. This policy, which seriously affected the minority communities, was interwoven with marked Islamic trends. In the draft of the 1950 constitution there appeared, for example, the following passage: 'Since the majority of the people of Syria belong to the Muslim faith, the state declares its adherence to Islam and to its ideas.' But under pressure from liberal Muslim and Christian circles, a compromise was reached and Islam was declared to be the religion of the head of the state.

After the overthrow of Shishakli the two ideologies, embodied in the PPS and the Ba'th, vigorously renewed their competition within both the young electorate and the new centre of power – the army. A third ideology, embodied in the Syrian communist party, was also gaining influence during the mid-1950s among the army and the intelligentsia. The party stood for a socialist revolution and for a separate and secular Syrian entity. But, as in the past, the pan-Arab party had a better chance of winning. In the 1954 election the Ba'th emerged as the third most numerous party in the parliament with 16 deputies out of 142. Within the army the Ba'th even won the upper hand, and its faction managed to successively defeat the rival PPS (SSNP) and communist factions. And with the help of the veteran nationalist parties, the Ba'th led Syria in 1958 into the historic union with Egypt (UAR), having been motivated not merely by its pan-Arab ideals but also by national-strategic considerations.[26]

New Trends under the Ba'th Regime

Alas, the union with Egypt (1958–61) became a highly traumatic experience for the Ba'thists (and for many other Syrians) since they were barred from senior government and military positions, while the country was subject to strict Egyptian control. This experience obviously contributed to cultivating or enhancing the concept of a Syrian–Arab nation-state among Ba'th activists (as well as among many other Syrians) who, in 1963, became the backbone of the Ba'thist revolution and of its new regime. This notion was practically stressed further by young Alawi (and Druze) military officers who emerged as the new rulers of Syria and had, or developed, vested interests in a 'separate' Syrian nation-state. Led by General Salah Jadid and influenced by PPS–SSNP and sometimes Marxist notions, these Alawi officers and their Sunni comrades also carried out strict secularist and socialist reforms for the first time in Syria's modern history. The

reforms, notably those reducing the Islamic character of the state, provoked large-scale popular demonstrations and riots and were periodically accompanied by harsh police measures and the shelling of mosques.

The secularist measures were formally articulated in the new constitution of 1969 which omitted the previous clause declaring Islam to be the religion of the president. The wording of his oath was accordingly changed from 'I swear by Allah Akbar' to 'I swear by my honour and faith'. The only reference to Islam was the following vague phrase: 'Islamic jurisprudence is the chief source of legislation.'[27] To be sure, these secularist policies, compounded by the severe socialist measures, brought about wide spread antagonism and deep alienation among many Sunni Muslims – notably *ulama* and members of the old urban middle classes – toward the 'ungodly' and 'heretic' 'neo'-Ba'th regime and its Alawi leaders.[28] This regime, led by Salah Jadid (1966–70), was indeed considered illegitimate by many citizens and thus failed to create a solid basis for a new Syrian political community.

Asad's Era

Well aware of the severe liabilities of Jadid's regime, Hafiz al-Asad, following his ascendancy in November 1970, adopted new policies aimed at regaining the allegiance of the Sunni Muslim population and expanding the basis for the new Syrian political community. To this end he changed or mitigated the secularist (or anti-Islamic) and socialist measures of his predecessor, and again stressed Syria's pan-Arab orientation while enhancing national-patriotic unity and economic development. In June 1971 he reinstated the old presidential-Islamic oath, lifted restrictions on Muslim institutions, encouraged the construction of new mosques and raised the salaries and prestige of Muslim dignitaries. He also endeavoured to underscore his own image as a faithful Muslim through a religious ruling of the Mufti of Damascus, as well as through other gestures.[29]

Simultaneously Asad's new regime introduced fresh economic measures aiming at revitalizing the small and middle-sized private enterprises, encouraging foreign investments and expanding trade. And while working towards a popular consensus through various state organs and public institutions, Asad sought to improve Syria's relations with most Arab nations, notably Egypt, and advance Arab unity by word and deed.[30]

Yet these enormous efforts at nation building have encountered major constraints and obstacles, and thus have only partially achieved their goals. It is evident that Asad's major failure has been to win the acquiescence, let alone the allegiance, of large sections of Sunni Muslim urban society, notably the conservative-religious elements. This was not only owing to the Alawi heterodox character of his military and security support base, but also due to certain anti-Islamic policies that he adopted, in accordance with his belief or with his interests.

Thus, for example, in early 1973 the 'Islamic clause' – stipulating that Islam is the religion of the president – was deleted from the draft of the permanent Syrian constitution. It provoked violent Muslim disturbances and demonstrations in several towns, against the 'secularism and sectarianism' of the 'fanatical Alawi regime' and against Asad, the 'enemy of Allah'.[31] The Islamic riots were ruthlessly crushed although Asad ordered the reinstatement of the 'Islamic clause' in the permanent Syrian constitution. Nevertheless, his military and political support of the Christian Maronites in their war with the Muslim radicals in Lebanon in 1976 caused a fresh cycle of violent actions in Syria by the Muslim Brothers against his regime.

Fostered also by economic difficulties, partly stemming from Syrian involvement in Lebanon, those riots developed into an open Islamic rebellion against Asad in the early 1980s. In reaction, the regime used severe measures against the Muslim rebels and in February 1982 Syrian military units shelled large parts of Hama – the centre of the Islamic rebellion – killing between 10,000 and 30,000 people including women and children.[32]

This brutal suppression of the Hama revolt undoubtedly neutralized or greatly diminished the Islamic opposition to Asad's regime, but simultaneously also further alienated many Sunni Muslims, conservative and liberal alike.

It would also appear that Asad's inter-Arab and anti-Israeli policies – excluding the 1973 war – did not contribute to regaining the allegiance of those Sunni Muslims or other Syrian–Arabs; this in view of the grave setbacks he encountered in pursuing these policies after 1973. For one thing, in 1975 Egypt, the leading Arab nation, broke away from its alliance with Syria and in 1979 signed a separate peace treaty with Israel. Simultaneously, during the late 1970s, Asad not only failed to reach a rapprochement with Iraq, the Ba'thist sister country, but after 1980 he supported Iran, the non-Arab, Shi'i nation

in its long and devastating war with Iraq. Furthermore, during the Kuwait war of 1990–91, Damascus collaborated with American, British and French 'imperialism' in the military campaign against Iraq. Earlier, Damascus fought against the Palestinian organizations in Lebanon in 1976 and in the 1982 Lebanese war it neglected to defend the PLO against the Israeli army, which also badly defeated Syrian military forces. And although Syria succeeded in 1985 in ousting, by proxy, the Israeli army from Lebanon, and extending its de facto control over that country, Asad nevertheless failed by the late 1980s to reach a strategic balance with Israel. Owing to this failure and to other crucial factors – the change of Soviet policy, the end of the Cold War, and Syria's severe economic crisis – Asad has been induced since 1988 to seek a political settlement with Israel. But while joining the peace process, Asad failed to prevent the PLO and Jordan during 1993–94 from signing separate political agreements with Israel.[33]

Yet, despite these serious rebuffs, Asad has possibly succeeded in building a basis for a new Syrian political community composed of certain sections of the population: peasants, urban workers, public employees, intellectuals and the youth, Sunnis, Christians, Alawis and Druze alike. Mostly organized by the Ba'th Party in agricultural cooperatives, trade unions, mass syndicates and other institutions, many of these party members as well as other Syrians have either ideologically identified with Asad's regime, and/or economically benefited from it. These groups have been educated or indoctrinated by the regime's various organs and have taken pride in its achievements.

Indeed, large sections of the Syrian population have been imbued with a distinct sense of Syrian nationhood having been born and brought up in the independent state of Syria (since 1946), many of them under the Ba'th regime since 1963. This has been due to their state education and watching their country's transformation, under Asad's rule, into a stable, modern state as well as a regional power. Many peasants and urban workers have significantly improved their socioeconomic condition, while their representatives have been politically mobilized to public and government positions on various levels. Similarly, the new middle classes, comprising of entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, senior military officers, party officials and the like, have developed vested interests in Asad's regime and its success. These groups and classes are likely to constitute the backbone of Asad's regime and the core of Syria's new political community. They are, as

it were, committed to enduring the Ba'th regime and protecting it against the hostile old forces of predominantly Sunni Muslim urban, traditional middle classes.

The pertinent question is whether Asad, during his life time, can consolidate these new forces and, through his nation-building institutions, enable them to sustain his regime and legacy also under changing circumstances, such as peaceful relations with Israel.

Notes

This article is a revised and enlarged version of an essay which first appeared in *The Middle East Journal* 26 (1972).

1. Cf. A. H. Hourani, 'The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the Eighteenth Century', in his *A Vision of History* (Beirut, 1961), pp. 40–1.
2. See, e.g., *Nafir Suriyya*, 25 October 1860; cf. A. H. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (London, 1962), pp. 101, 274ff.
3. See P. Hitti, *History of Syria* (London, 1951), p. 351.
4. PRO FO, 226/70, 1840.
5. Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840–1861* (Oxford, 1968), p. 242.
6. FO 78/1586. Damascus, 10 January 1861.
7. See, e.g., Shimon Shamir, 'The Modernization of Syria' in W. Polk and R. Chambers (eds), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 374–5.
8. FO 78/1978. Beirut, 21 December 1867.
9. J. Murray, *A Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine* (London, 1858), vol. 1, XLVI.
10. Yusuf al-Hakim, *Suriyya wa'l-'Ahd al-'Uthmani* (Beirut, 1966), vol. 1, p. 84.
11. FO 195/2255, Jerusalem, 10 August 1907.
12. See Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform.*, pp. 226ff.
13. FO 195/2255. Jerusalem, 10 August 1907.
14. FO 78/1389, Aleppo, 7 August 1858, cited in Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, p. 246.
15. J. Finn, *Stirring Times* (London, 1878), vol. 1, pp. 215–8.
16. E. Dawn, 'The Rise of Arabism in Syria', *The Middle East Journal* 16 (1962), p. 163.
17. A. L. Tibawi, *Modern History of Syria* (London, 1969), p. 150.
18. Sati' al-Husri, *Yawm Maysalun* (Beirut, 1947), p. 83.
19. Ibid., p. 77.
20. A. H. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon* (London, 1946), pp. 93–5. See also P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 311ff.
21. League of Nations, Permanent Mandate Commission 27th Session (1935).

22. A. H. Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World* (London, 1947), p. 77.
23. P. Seale, *The Struggle for Syria* (London, 1965), p. 32.
24. See Rizkallah Hilan, *Culture et developpement en Syria* (Paris, 1969), pp. 286ff; *al-Jadid* (Beirut), 29 September 1967; *al-Ba'th* (Damascus), 12 October 1967.
25. For details see R. H. Hinnebusch, *Authoritarian Power and State Formation in Ba'thist Syria* (Boulder, 1989).
26. Cf. Seale, *Syria*, pp. 307ff.
27. *al-Thawra* (Damascus), 3 May 1969.
28. Tibawi, *Syria*, pp. 415–17; E. Rouleau, 'The Syrian Enigma: What is the Baath'? *New Left Review* 45 (1967), p. 64; *al-Hayat* (Beirut), 5 May 1967; *al-Nahar* (Beirut), 9 May 1967.
29. Moshe Ma'oz, *Asad the Sphinx of Damascus: A Political Biography* (London & New York, 1988), pp. 150–1.
30. Ma'oz, *Asad*, pp. 74ff., 109ff. Patrick Seale, *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (London, 1988), 169ff.
31. M. Ma'oz, 'The Emergence of Modern Syria', in M. Ma'oz and A. Yaniv (eds), *Syria under Assad* (New York, 1986), p. 32.
32. Ma'oz, *Asad*, pp. 159ff.; Seale, *Asad*, 320 ff.
33. For a detailed examination of Asad's relations with other Arab nations and with Israel, see Moshe Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel: From War to Peacemaking* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 140ff.

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